

2247
CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

A

SERMON,

PREACHED IN THE LAL BAZAR CHAPEL,

CALCUTTA,

ON LORD'S-DAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 1812,

PREVIOUS TO THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE ORDINANCE

OF

BAPTISM.

With many Quotations from Pædobaptist Authors.

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The Author of the following discourse was, by education and profession, a Pædobaptist. During his passage from America to India, in the spring of 1812, he began to doubt the truth of his former sentiments. After his arrival in this country, and before he communicated the exercises of his mind to any of the Baptist denomination, he became convinced, that the immersion of a professing believer, into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is the only christian baptism.

This discourse exhibits the reasons of his present belief. It is committed to the press, in compliance with the request of some who heard it, and through the desire of furnishing his distant friends in America, with a more full and satisfactory statement of the reasons of his change, than could be made in private communications.

N. B. For many of the testimonies, inserted in this discourse, the Author acknowledges himself indebted to Mr. Booth's Pædobaptism Examined.

CALCUTTA, Nov. 1812.

SERMON.

MATTHEW xxviii. 19.

— *Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

WHEN our Lord commissioned his disciples to proselyte all nations, he instituted the sacred ordinance of baptism.

The words of the institution suggest two inquiries ; *What is baptism ?* and, *To whom is baptism to be administered ?*

I. *What is baptism ?*

Had the Greek word ($\beta\alpha\pi\tau\iota\zeta\omega$), which denotes the principal action in this ordinance, been translated, in the English version of the New Testament, there would probably have been, among English readers, no dispute concerning its import. Had either of the English words, *wash*, or *sprinkle*, or *immerse*, been substituted for the Greek word, an English reader would instantly conceive an appropriate meaning. But, unhappily, our translators have retained the original word, and contented themselves with merely changing its termination. By this means, an English reader is deprived of his usual guide. There are no other applications of the word, in his own language, from which he can learn its import. The only expedient, therefore, of which he can avail himself, is to ascertain the import of the original word : and to this end, the following considerations may conduce.

I. The primitive word ($\beta\acute{\alpha}\pi\tau\omega$), from which the word denoting baptism, is derived, signifies *immersion*. This is as much the appropriate meaning of the Greek word, as of the English word, *dip* or *immerse*.* This

* DR. WORCESTER. "Had it been the intention of the Saviour, to confine his followers to dipping or immersion, the proper word to express this ordinance, would have been, not $\beta\alpha\pi\tau\iota\zeta\omega$, but $\beta\acute{\alpha}\pi\tau\omega$," *Letters to Dr. Baldwin*, Let. xxii. p. 125.

word is used, in the New Testament, when the rich man entreats, that Lazarus may be sent to *dip* the tip of his finger in water ;* when Christ says, “ He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have *dipped* it ;”† and when, in the Revelation, Christ is represented, as clothed with a vesture *dipped* in blood.‡ The inspired penmen have used no other word, beside this and its derivatives, to convey the idea of immersion ; nor have they ever used this word, in any other sense.

The word denoting baptism, is derived from the *verbal* of this primitive word, by a change in the termination, which, according to an established principle of the Greek language, *never* affects the primary idea ; but when made on words, expressing a quality or attribute, merely conveys the additional idea of *causing* or *making*.

Thus the Greek word, which signifies *pure*, with this change of termination, signifies *to make pure*. The Greek word, which signifies *sprinkled*, with this change of termination, signifies *to make sprinkled*, or *to sprinkle*. And the Greek word, which signifies *immersed*, with this change of termination, signifies *to make immersed*, or *to immerse*.||

* Luke xvi. 24.

† John xiii. 26.

‡ Rev. xix. 13.

|| The termination *ιζω*, in Greek derivatives, is precisely of the same import, as the termination *fy*, in English derivatives, from the Latin *fio*, *to make* ; as,

sanctify, *to make holy*, from sanctus, *holy* ;

mollify, *to soften*, from mollis, *soft*, &c.

On the same principle, in Greek ;

ἀγνίζω, *to purify*, from ἀγνός, *pure* ;

σοφίζω, *to make wise*, from σοφός, *wise*.

γεμίζω, *to fill*, from γέμω, *to be full*, &c.

And derivatives are thus formed, not only from adjectives and neuter verbs, but also from the *verbals* of transitive verbs ; as,

αἰρέω, *to choose* ; αἰρέτης, *chosen* ; αἰρεσιζω, *to make chosen*, *to choose* ;

ἐμφανίω, *to show* ; ἐμφανής, *shown* ; ἐμφανίζω, *to make shown*, *to show* ;

καθαίρω, *to cleanse* ; καθάρος, *clean* ; καθαρίζω, *to make clean*, *to cleanse* ;

πρω, *to drink* ; πότος, *drank* ; ποτιζω, *to cause to be drank* ;

ῥαίνω, *to sprinkle* ; ῥαντός, *sprinkled* ; ῥαντίζω, *to make sprinkled*, *to sprinkle*.

And according to the same analogy ;

βάπτω, *to immerse* ; βαπτός, *immersed* ; βαπτίζω, *to make immersed*, *to immerse*.

Accordingly, that eminent Greek critic, Dr. Campbell, expressly pronounces the primitive and the derivative to be synonymous.*

2. The word, which denotes the ordinance of baptism, according to the usage of Greek writers, uniformly signifies or implies *immersion*.

It is the word, used in the septuagint translation of the Old Testament, to express the action of Naaman, when he *dipped* himself seven times in Jordan.† It is frequently used by Josephus, to convey the idea of immersion; particularly, in his account of the death of one, who was drowned in a pool, by order of Herod.‡

Numerous instances may be produced from other Greek authors, to confirm this signification.||

Nor has any instance been produced, in which the word, literally applied, does not denote *immersion*, or *washing by immersion*. In figurative applications, this word, like the English words *dip* and *immerse*, and like all other words, is probably used with some freedom. But should a few instances of this kind be found, would they be sufficient to invalidate the force of evidence, resulting from the proper and general use of the word? What law will bind the subject, if he is at liberty to depart from the proper and general interpretation of the principal term, and affix to it a signification, which is drawn from some rare figurative application? Had

* *Four Gospels*, Note on Matt. xx. 22. See also, to the same purpose, BECKMANNUS, *Exercit. Theolog.* Ex. xvii, p. 257; BURMANNUS, *Synops Theolog.* Loc. xliii. c. vi. § 2; SUICERUS, *Thesaur. Eccles.* sub voce βάπτισμα; TURRETTINUS, *Institut.* Loc. xix. Quæst. xi. § 4; HEIDEGGERUS, *Corpus Theolog. Christ.* Loc. xxv. § 21.

† 2 Kings v. 14.

‡ *Antiq. Jud.* L. xv. C. iii. § 3. See also *Antiq. Jud.* L. iv. C. iv. § 6; *De Bell. Jud.* L. iv. C. iii. § 3; and, as quoted by Dr. D. Scott, L. i. C. xxii. § 2; L. i. C. xxvii. § 1; L. ii. C. xviii. § 4; L. ii. C. xx. § 1; L. iii. C. ix. § 3; L. iii. C. x. § 9.

|| STRABO, L. xii. p. 391. L. xiv. p. 458. DIO, xxxvii. p. 64. xxxviii. p. 84. L. p. 492. POLYB. iii. C. lxxii. V. C. xlvi. PLUTARCH, *De Superstit.* Tom. ii. Op. f. 166. DIODORUS SICULUS, L. i. C. xxxvi. C. lxxiii. HELIODORUS, L. v. p. 197. PORPHYRIUS, *De Styge*, p. 282. ÆSCHYLUS, *Prometh. Vinc.* p. 53.

the rite of baptism been prescribed in the English language, and the word *dip* been used to express the action, could we have entertained a doubt concerning the meaning? And in what light should we regard an attempt to prove, that it had no definite import, but signified sprinkling, or any kind of wetting, because Dr. Johnson defines the word, 1. *To immerge*; 2. *To moisten, to wet*; and in proof of the latter meaning, cites these lines of Milton:

“And tho’ not mortal, yet a cold shuddering dew
Dips me all o’er?”

If this principle of interpretation be allowed, it will completely destroy the force of every command.

The following testimonies, concerning the import of the word βαπτίζω, are given by eminent authors, who were professed Pædobaptists; and whose concessions, therefore, on this subject, could not have been influenced by attachment to their religious system, but must have resulted from a conviction of truth alone.

BUDDÆUS. “The words βαπτίζειν and βαπτισμός are not to be interpreted of aspersion, but *always* of immersion.”*

ALSTEDIUS. “βαπτίζειν, *to baptize*, signifies *only* to immerse, not to wash, except by consequence.”†

J. J. WETSTENIUS. “To baptize is to plunge, to dip. The body, or part of the body, *being under water*, is said to be baptized.”‡

J. ALTINGIUS. “For baptism is immersion, when the whole body is immersed; but the term baptism is *never* used concerning aspersion.”||

BEZA. “Christ commanded us to be baptized, by which word, it is certain, immersion is signified.—Nor does βαπτίζειν signify to wash, except by consequence; for it properly signifies to immerse for the sake of dyeing.—To be baptized in water, signifies *no other*, than

* *Theolog. Dogmat.* L. v. C. i. § 5. † *Lexicon Theolog.* C. xii. p. 221.

‡ *Comment.* ad Matt. iii. 6.

|| *Comment.* ad Heb. ix. 10.

to be immersed in water, which is the external ceremony of baptism.”*

LUTHER. “The term baptism is a Greek word. It may be rendered immersion, as when we plunge something in water, that it may be entirely covered with water. And though that custom is now abolished among the generality (for even children are not entirely immersed, but only have a little water poured on them;) nevertheless, they ought to be completely immersed, and immediately drawn out. *For the etymology of the word evidently requires it.*”†

CASAUBON. “This was the rite of baptizing, that persons were plunged into the water; *which the very word βαπτίζω, to baptize, sufficiently declares.*”‡

CATTENBURGH. “In baptism the whole body is ordered to be immersed.”||

KECKERMANNUS. “We cannot deny, that the first institution of baptism, consisted in immersion, and not sprinkling.”§

SALMASIUS.¶ “Thus Novatus, when sick, received baptism, being περιχυθείς *besprinkled*, not βαπτισθείς, *baptized*. Euseb. vi. Hist. C. xliii.”**

Dr. CAMPBELL. “The word βαπτίζω, both in sacred authors, and in classical, signifies *to dip, to plunge, to immerse*; and was rendered by Tertullian, the oldest of the Latin fathers, *tingere*, the term used for dyeing cloth, which was by immersion. *It is always construed suitably to this meaning.* Thus it is ἐν ὕδατι, ἐν ᾧ ἰορδάνῃ. But I should not lay much stress on the preposition ἐν, which, answering to the Hebrew ב, may

* Epist. ii. ad Thom. Tilium. Annot. in Marc. vii. 4, and Act. xix. 3.

† Opera, Tom. i. p. 72. Wit. 1582.

‡ Annot. in Matt. iii. 6. || Spicileg. Theolog. L. iv. C. lxiv. Sect. ii. § 22.

§ System. Theolog. L. iii. C. viii. p. 369.

¶ For the character of Salmasius, “a man of very extraordinary abilities, and profound erudition,” see the *Panoplist* for Sept. 1808, Art. *Salmasius*. Vol. i. New Series, p. 148.

** Apud Witsii. œcon. Fœd. L. iv. C. xvi. § 13.

denote *with*, as well as *in*, did not the whole phraseology, in regard to this ceremony, concur in evincing the same thing.—Had βαπτίζω been here employed in the sense of *παίω*, *I sprinkle* (*which, as far as I know, it never is, in any use, sacred or classical,*) the expression would doubtless have been,*—“When, therefore, the Greek word βαπτίζω is adopted, I may say, rather than translated into modern languages, the mode of construction ought to be preserved, so far as may conduce to suggest its original import. It is to be regretted, that we have so much evidence, that even good and learned men allow their judgments to be warped, by the sentiments and customs of the sect which they prefer. The true partizan, of whatever denomination, always inclines to correct the diction of the Spirit, by that of the party.”†

3. There are no instances, in the New Testament, which require us to depart from the *etymological* and *established* interpretation of the word.

We must believe, that the writers of the New Testament, used words, according to their usual acceptance, in the Greek language, unless the connexion requires some other interpretation. If we suppose, that they used words in a manner different from common, established use, without giving sufficient intimation, either expressly, or by the obvious scope of the passage, we must give up our only guide to the meaning of any word, or charge them with a design of misleading. They certainly knew that their readers would naturally and necessarily interpret every word in the usual way, unless taught differently by the connexion.

* The two verbs, rendered *wash*, in the English translation, are different in the original. The first is *νίωμαι*, properly translated *wash*; the second is *βαπτισμαί*, which limits us to a particular mode of washing; for βαπτίζω denotes to plunge, to dip.—βαπτίζεσθαι, says that excellent critic (Wetstein) “est manus aquæ immergere, *βαπτίζεσθαι* manibus affundere.” Note on Mark vii. 3, 4.

† *Four Gospels*, Note on Matt. iii. 11.

Let us examine those instances, in which it has been supposed, that the connexion renders the idea of immersion inadmissible.

It is said, that we cannot suppose, that the washings (according to the Greek *baptisms*) of cups, and pots, and brazen vessels, and tables, or those ablutions which the Jews practised before eating, were all done by immersion.*

With regard to the former, it must be remembered, that the Jews were commanded, in their law, to cleanse unclean vessels by immersing them: "whether it be any vessel of wood, or raiment, or skin, or sack, whatsoever vessel it be, wherein any work is done, *it must be put into water.*"† What is more probable, than that they abused the first institution of this ceremony, by superstitiously immersing a variety of articles, not included in the divine command?

That the Jews, on returning from market, immersed themselves before eating, may appear improbable to an inhabitant of the north of Europe or America; but not to you, my brethren, who are acquainted with the customs of these eastern countries, and witness the frequent ceremonial immersion of the natives.

But that these baptisms were really immersions, and, therefore, that the use of the word, in these instances, instead of weakening, must confirm the belief, that it always means immersion, appears from the testimonies of the learned Scaliger, and an eminent Jewish Rabbi.

SCALIGER. "The more superstitious part of them" (the Jews,) "every day, before they sat down to meat, dipped the whole body. Hence the Pharisees' admiration at Christ, Luke xi. 38."‡

MAIMONIDES. "Wherever in the law, washing of the flesh, or of the clothes, is mentioned, it means nothing else, than the dipping of the whole body in a la-

* Mark vii. 3, 4. † Lev. xi. 32. ‡ *De Emend. Templ.* L. vi. p. 771.

ver; for if any man dips himself all over, except the tip of his little finger, he is still in his uncleanness.”*

“A bed that is wholly defiled, if a man dips it part by part, it is pure.”†

It is said, that the three thousand, converted on the day of pentecost, could not have been baptized by immersion the same day.

Nor is it recorded, that they were baptized the same day, but that they were added to the disciples.‡ On the supposition, however, that they were all baptized the same day, was it impossible for the twelve, assisted by the seventy, and perhaps others, to administer the ordinance by immersion?§ In the preceding chapter, we are informed, that the number of disciples together, was one hundred and twenty.

Another objection is thus stated: “At dead of night, in the city of Philippi, the *jailer and all his*, were baptized by Paul and Silas.¶ Is it to be believed, that, in a city guarded by Roman centinels, the *prisoners*, Paul and Silas, when their jailer had received a strict charge, at his peril, to keep them safely, would, nevertheless, take him and his family abroad, in the night, just after the whole city had been roused by an earthquake, and go to a pond, or a river, to baptize them by immersion?”¶¶

This case can present no difficulty to the minds of any of you, my brethren, who may have been within the yard of the prison in this city, or are acquainted with the fact, that prison-yards, in the east, as well as the yards and gardens of private houses, are usually furnished with tanks of water.

* *Hilchot. Mikvaot*, C. i. Sect. ii.

† *Hilchot. Celim*. C. xxvi. Sect. xiv. See also, to the same purpose, IKENIUS, *Antiq. Hebraicæ*, Pars i. C. xviii. § 9; and Mr. STACKHOUSE, *Hist. of the Bible*, B. viii. C. i. p. 1234.

‡ Acts ii. 41.

§ See VENEMÆ, *Hist. Eccles. Secul. i.* § 138; and BUDDÆI *Theolog. Dogmat.* L. v. C. i. § 5.

¶ Acts xvi. 23—34.

¶¶ Dr. WORCESTER's *Lett. to Dr. Baldwin*, Let. xxii. p. 127.

It is said again, with reference to the rites of cleansing, under the Jewish dispensation, that, “by the apostle to the Hebrews,* these various purifications, or *sprinklings*, are expressly called (*διαφοροῖς βαπτίσμοις*) *diverse baptisms*.”†

This might be urged with some plausibility, had no immersions been prescribed in the Jewish ritual. But since these were numerous, as will appear, on examining the Levitical law,‡ the application of the word, by the apostle Paul, affords no reason for ascribing to it any other, beside its usual import.§

Another instance supposed to be objectionable, may be thus stated. Christ promised to baptize his disciples with the Holy Spirit;|| and on the day of pentecost, fulfilled his promise by *pouring out* the Spirit upon them.** Here, it is said, the pouring out of the Spirit is compatible, with the supposition, that sprinkling or pouring is baptism, but not with the supposition, that immersion only is baptism.

It must be remembered, that the literal meaning of a word is not to be ascertained from a figurative application. If the pouring out of the Spirit proves that sprinkling or pouring is baptism, their being filled with the Spirit proves that filling is baptism.

The pouring out of the Spirit upon them is, however, perfectly consistent with the promise of Christ, that he would immerse them in the Spirit. This was the means by which he performed his promise. He poured out the Spirit upon them to such a degree, that they were immersed, according to his promise, and even filled with the Spirit. This is confirmed by the symbol of the rush-

* Heb ix. 10.

† Dr. WORCESTER'S *Letters to Dr. Baldwin*, Let. xxii. p. 128.

‡ See among other instances, Lev. xv. xvi. 26, 28. Num. xix. 7, 8.

§ J. ALTINGIUS. “Washings, the apostle calls diverse baptisms: that is, various immersions.—Those Jewish washings were manifold.” *Comment. ad Heb. ix. 10.*

|| Acts i. 5.

** Acts ii. 1—4 and 33.

ing, mighty wind, which is used to denote the Holy Spirit. *It filled all the house, where they were a sitting.**

The baptism of the Israelites in the cloud, and in the sea, mentioned by the apostle Paul,† has been thought incompatible with the idea of immersion.

The apostle, in the context, informs us *how* they were baptized, not by being sprinkled or washed, but *by being under the cloud, and by passing through the sea*. Is there any impropriety in representing their situation, with the sea on each side, and the cloud covering them, as an immersion in the cloud, and in the sea? Is not this the natural, obvious import of the passage? As to the supposition, that they were sprinkled with spray from the sea, and rain from the cloud, it is made without evidence (the eighth and ninth verses of the sixty-eighth Psalm not alluding to this event,‡) and appears too fanciful, and too evidently contrived for the occasion, to require farther remark.||

* Abp. TILLOTSON. "*It filled all the house*. This is that which our Saviour calls, *baptizing with the Holy Ghost*. So that they, who sat in the house, were, as it were, *immersed* in the Holy Ghost, as they who were buried with water, were overwhelmed, or covered all over with water, which is the proper notion of baptism." *Sermons*, Sermon cxcvii. See also, to the same purpose, CYRIL, *Cateches*. xvii. § 8, 10; GURTLEUS, *Institut. Theolog.* C. xxxiii; IKENIUS, *Dissert. Philolog. Theolog.* Dissert. xix. p. 325; LE CLERC, *Remarques sur Nouv. Test.* a Matt. iii. 1; CASAUBON, in Act. i. 5; Mr. LEIGH, *Annot. on Matt.* iii. 11; Bp. HOPKINS, *Works*, p. 519; Bp. REYNOLDS, *Works*, p. 226.

† 1 Cor. x. 1, 2.

‡ See Dr. TH. SCOTT's Note on Ps. lxxviii. 9.

|| WIRSIUS. "How were the Israelites baptized in the cloud, and in the sea, seeing they were neither immersed in the sea, nor wetted by the cloud? It is to be considered, that the apostle here uses the term baptism in a figurative sense.—The cloud hung over their heads; and so the water is over those that are baptized. The sea surrounded them on each side; and so the water, in regard to those that are baptized." *Æcon. Foed.* L. iv. C. x. § 11. See also, to the same purpose, TURRETTINUS, *Disput. de Bap. Nubis et Maris*, § 24; Sir NORTON KNATCHBULL, *Animad. in Lib. Nov. Test.* ad 1 Pet. iii. 20, 21; VENEMA, *Dissert. Sac.* L. ii. C. xiv. § 9—11; GROTIUS, in 1 Cor. x. 2; BRAUNIUS, *Doctrina Foed.* Loc. xviii. C. x. § 7; Mr. GATAKER, *Adversar. Miscel.* Cap. iv; CAMERO, in loc. BENNELIUS, *Gnomon*, in loc. MARCKIUS, *Bib. Exercitat.* Ex. viii. § 12; Mr. POOL's Continuators, Dr. HAMMOND and Dr. WHITBY, on the place.

We have now considered the principal instances, in the New Testament, which have been thought to attach some other idea, beside that of immersion, to the term denoting baptism; and certainly discover no sufficient reason for departing from the etymological and established interpretation.

4. The circumstances attending the instances of baptism, recorded in the New Testament, plainly indicate immersion.

John baptized *in the river Jordan*,* and in Enon, *because there was much water there*.† Christ was baptized *in Jordan*, and after the ordinance, *came up out of the water*.‡ Philip and the eunuch *went down both into the water*, and after baptism, *came up out of the water*.|| The phrase, *went into the water*, does not, indeed, imply *in itself*, that the subjects were immersed. It is one thing, to go into the water; and it is another thing, to be immersed. But the phrase implies *by consequence*, that the subjects were immersed. For it cannot be supposed, that John and the primitive disciples resorted to rivers, and went into the water, for the purpose of pouring or sprinkling. Do the advocates of pouring or sprinkling find this the most convenient mode of administering the ordinance?

5. The idea of immersion is the only one, which will suit all the various connexions, in which the word is used in the New Testament.

The word certainly has some meaning, whether more limited, or more general; and when used to denote the ordinance of baptism, certainly has one uniform meaning, which is applicable in every instance. What is this meaning?

Is it *sprinkling*? We must then read, And they were all sprinkled of him in the river Jordan;§ Buried with him by sprinkling;¶ They were all sprinkled unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea.**

* Mark i. 5. † John iii. 23. ‡ Mark i. 9, 10. || Acts viii. 38, 39.

§ Mark i. 5.

¶ Rom. vi. 4.

** 1 Cor. x. 2.

Is it *washing*? We must then read, He shall wash you with (Greek, *in*) the Holy Ghost and fire;* Arise and be washed, and wash away thy sins;† So many of us, as were washed into Jesus Christ, were washed into his death.‡

The idea of immersion *always* suits the connexion in which the word is used; or, in the words of Dr. Campbell, the word "*is always construed suitably to this meaning.*" Thus we may read, with propriety of sentiment and expression, And they were all immersed of him in the river Jordan; Buried with him by immersion; They were all immersed unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea; He shall immerse you in the Holy Ghost and fire; Arise and be immersed, and wash away thy sins; So many of us, as were immersed into Jesus Christ, were immersed into his death.

6. The Greek people certainly understand their own native language, better than any foreigners. We must, therefore, believe, that their practice, whatever it be, affords a correct and indisputable interpretation of the Greek word. Now, from the first introduction of the gospel, to the present time, they have invariably practised immersion. This is true, not only of the Greek people, but of the whole Greek church, from the southern provinces of Greece, to the northern extremity of the Russian empire, a church, which, in point of territory and population, embraces nearly one half of Christendom.

DEYLINGIUS. "The Greeks retain the rite of immersion to this day, as Jeremiah, the patriarch of Constantinople declares."||

Mr. CHAMBERS. "In the primitive times, this ceremony was performed by immersion; as it is to this day, in the oriental churches, according to the original signification of the word."§

* Matt. iii. 11.

† Acts xxii. 16.

‡ Rom. iv. 3.

|| *De Prudent. Pastoral. Pars. iii. C. iii. § 26.*

§ *Cyclopædia, Art. Baptism. Edit. 7th.*

Dr. WALL. "All the christians in Asia, all in Africa, and about one third part of Europe, are of the last sort" (practise immersion,) "in which third part of Europe, are comprehended the christians of Græcia, Thracia, Servia, Bulgaria, Rascia, Wallachia, Moldavia, Russia, Nigra, and so on; and even the Muscovites, who, if coldness of the country will excuse, might plead for a dispensation with the most reason of any."—"The Greek church, in all the branches of it, does still use immersion; and they hardly count a child, except in case of sickness, well baptized without it."*

7. Not only all the branches of the Greek church, but the whole christian world, for the space of thirteen hundred years, practised immersion, as the only valid baptism. Sprinkling or pouring was never tolerated, except in case of dangerous sickness, or want of a sufficient quantity of water; and even then, the validity of the application was always disputed. Those who were thus baptized by pouring, were called *clinics*, not *christians*, and were prohibited the priesthood. Never, by any christians, in any age, was sprinkling or pouring allowed in common cases, until the council of Ravenna, assembled by the pope, in the year thirteen hundred and eleven, declared immersion or pouring to be indifferent. From that time, the latter gradually came into general use. It was not, however, admitted into England, till the middle of the sixteenth century, and not sanctioned, till the middle of the seventeenth; when the Westminster assembly decided, that "dipping of the person in water, is not necessary; but baptism is rightly administered, by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person."† "This decision, however, was carried by a majority of one, *there being twenty-five for it, and twenty-four against it.*"‡

As the truth of these assertions, concerning the practice of the church, must be established by testimony,

* *Hist. of Inf. Bap.* Part. ii. C. ix. p. 447.

† *Confession*, Chap. xxviii. 3. ‡ *HALDANE's Reasons*, Chap. i. p. 17.

independently of argumentation, I hope to be excused for the number and length of the following quotations, from Pœdobaptist authors of acknowledged authority.

GROTIUS. "That baptism used to be performed by immersion, and not by pouring, appears both from the proper signification of the word, and the places chosen for the administration of the rite, John iii. 23 ; Acts viii, 38 ; and also from the many allusions of the apostles, which cannot be referred to sprinkling, Rom. vi. 3, 4 ; Col. ii. 12."*

VITRINCA. "The act of baptizing is the immersion of believers in water. This expresses the force of the word. Thus also it was performed by Christ and the apostles."†

CURCELLÆUS. "Baptism was performed by plunging the whole body into water, and not by sprinkling a few drops, as is now the practice.—Nor did the disciples, that were sent out by Christ, administer baptism afterwards, *in any other way*."‡

WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY of DIVINES. "*Buried with him by baptism*. See Col. ii. 12. In this phrase, the apostle seemeth to allude to the ancient manner of baptism, which was to dip the parties baptized, and, as it were, to bury them under the water."||

CALVIN. "From these words, John iii. 23, it may be inferred, that baptism was administered by John and Christ, by plunging the whole body under water.—Here we perceive how baptism was administered among the ancients ; for they immersed the whole body in water."§

Mr. BAILEY. "Baptism, in strictness of speech, is that kind of ablution or washing, which consists in dipping ;

* Apud Poli *Synops.* ad Matt. iii. 6.

† *Aphorismi. Sanct. Theolog.* Aph. 834.

‡ *Relig. Christ Institut.* L. v. C. ii.

|| *Annot.* on Rom. vi. 4. See also, to the same purpose Bp. PEARCE, *Note* on 1 Cor. xv. 29 ; and Bp. BURNET, *Expos.* xxxix. *Articles*, p. 374.

§ In Joan. iii. 23. *Comment.* in Act viii. 38.

and when applied to the christian institution, so called, it was used by the primitive christians, *in no other sense, than that of dipping*, as the learned Grotius and Casaubon well observe.”*

Dr. WALL.† “We should not know by these accounts” (John iii. 28 ; Mark i. 5 ; Acts viii. 38,) “whether the whole body of the baptized was put under water, head and all, were it not for two later proofs, which seem to me to put it out of question. One, that St. Paul does twice, in an allusive way of speaking, call baptism a burial, which allusion is not so proper, if we conceive them to have gone into the water, only up to the arm-pits, &c. as it is, if their whole body was immersed. The other, the custom of the near succeeding times.—As for sprinkling, I say, as Mr. Blake, at its first coming up in England, “*Let them defend it, that use it.*”‡

Mr. BINGHAM. “There are a great many passages, in the epistles of St. Paul, which plainly refer to this custom” (immersion.) “As this was *the original apostolical practice* ; so it continued to be *the universal practice of the church, for many ages*, upon the same symbolical reasons, as it was first used by the apostles.—It appears from Epiphanius and others, that almost all heretics, who retained any baptism, retained immersion also.—The only heretics, against whom this charge” (of not baptizing by a *total* immersion) “is brought, were the Eunomians, a branch of the Arians.”§

Dr. TOWERSON. “But, therefore, as there is so much the more reason, to represent the rite of immersion, as *the only legitimate rite* of baptism, because *the only one*,

* *Dictionary*, Dr. Scott’s Edit. 1772.

† In a general convocation of the English clergy, Feb. 9, 1706, it was ordered, “that the thanks of this house be given to Mr. Wall, vicar of Shoreham in Kent, for the learned and excellent book he hath lately written, concerning infant baptism.” In Dr. Baldwin’s *Bap. of Believers only*, Part. ii. Sect. iv. p. 91.

‡ *Def. of Hist. of Inf. Bap.* p. 131, 140.

§ *Origines Eccles.* B. xi. C. xi.

that can answer the ends of its institution, and those things which were to be signified by it ; so especially, if (*as is well known, and undoubtedly of great force*) the general practice of the primitive church was agreeable thereto, and the practice of the Greek church, to this very day. For who can think, either the one, or the other, would have been so tenacious of so troublesome a rite, were it not, that they were well assured, as they of the primitive church might very well be, of its being *the only instituted and legitimate one* ?”*

VENEMA. “It is without controversy, that baptism in the primitive church, was administered by immersion into water, and not by sprinkling.—The essential act of baptizing, in the second century, consisted, not in sprinkling, but in immersion into water, in the name of each person in the Trinity. Concerning immersion, the words and phrases that are used, sufficiently testify ; and that it was performed in a river, a pool, or a fountain.—To the essential rites of baptism, in the third century, pertained immersion, and not aspersion, except in cases of necessity, *and it was accounted a half-perfect baptism*.—Immersion, in the fourth century, was one of those acts, that were considered as essential to baptism ;—nevertheless, aspersion was used in the last moments of life, on such as were called clinics,—and also, where there was not a sufficient quantity of water.”†

SALMASIUS. “The ancients did not baptize, otherwise than by immersion, either once or thrice ; except clinics, or persons confined to their beds, who were baptized in a manner of which they were capable ; not in the entire laver, as those who plunge the head under water ; but the whole body had water poured upon it. (Cypr. iv. Epist. vii.) Thus Novatus, when sick, received baptism, being *περικλυβος*, *besprinkled*, not *βαπτισθης*, *baptized*. Euseb. vi. *Hist. C.* xliii.”‡

* *Of the Sacram. of Bap.* Part. iii. p. 58.

† *Hist. Eccles.* *Secl.* i. § 138 ; *Secl.* ii. § 100 ; *Secl.* iii. § 51 ; *Secl.* iv. § 110.

‡ *Apud Witsii Œcon. Fœd. L.* iv. C. xvi. § 13.

Bp. TAYLOR. "The custom of the ancient churches was not sprinkling, but immersion; in pursuance of the sense of the word (baptize) in the commandment, and the example of our blessed Saviour. Now this was of so sacred account in their esteem, that they did not account it lawful to receive him into the clergy, who had been only sprinkled in his baptism, as we learn from the epistle of Cornelius to Fabius of Antioch, *apud Euseb.* L. vi. C. xliii.—It was a formal and solemn question, made by Magnus to Cyprian, whether they are to be esteemed right christians, who were only sprinkled with water, and not washed or dipped."*

CYPRIAN. (*In reply to the question of Magnus*) "In the saving sacraments, when necessity obliges, and God grants his indulgence, *abridgments* of divine things will confer the whole on believers."†

Dr. WALL. "Anno Dom. 251, Novatian was, by one party of the clergy and people of Rome, chosen bishop of that church, in a schismatical way, and in opposition to Cornelius, who had been before chosen by the major part, and was already ordained. Cornelius does, in a letter to Fabius, bishop of Antioch, vindicate his right, and shews that Novatian came not canonically to his orders of priesthood, much less was he capable of being chosen bishop; for that all the clergy, and a great many of the laity were against his being ordained presbyter, because it was not lawful, they said, for any one that had been baptized in his bed, in time of sickness (*τον εν κλινη δια νοσον περικυθεντα*), as he had been, to be admitted to any office of the clergy."‡

CORNELIUS. "He" (Novatian) "fell into a grievous distemper, and it being supposed, that he would die immediately, he received baptism, being sprinkled

* *Ductor Dubitantium*, B. iii C. iv. Rule 15.

† "In sacramentis salutaribus, necessitate cogente, et Deo indulgentiam suam largiente, totum credentibus conferunt divina compendia." *Epistola ad Magnum*. Edit. Paris, 1643.

‡ *Hist. of Inf. Bap.* Part ii. C. ix. p. 463.

with water on the bed whereon he lay, *if that can be termed baptism.*”*

VALESIIUS. “People which were sick, and baptized in their beds, could not be dipped in water, by the priest, but were sprinkled with water by him. *This baptism was thought imperfect, and not solemn* for several reasons. Also, they, who were thus baptized, were called, ever afterwards, *clinici*; and by the twelfth canon of the council of Neocæsarea, *these clinici were prohibited priesthood.*”†

VENEMA. “Beveridge, on the fiftieth apostolical canon, asserts, that the ceremony of sprinkling began to be used instead of immersion, about the time of Pope Gregory, in the sixth century; but without producing any testimony in favour of his assertion; and it is undoubtedly a mistake. Martene declares, in his *Antiq. Eccles. Rit.* L. i. p. i. C. i. that, in all the ritual books, or pontifical manuscripts, ancient or modern, that he had seen, immersion is required; except by the Cenomanensian, and that of a more modern date, in which pouring on the head is mentioned. In the council of Ravenna, also, held in the year thirteen hundred and eleven, both immersion and pouring are left to the determination of the administrator; and the council of Nismes, in the year one thousand two hundred and eighty-four, permitted pouring, if a vessel could not be had; therefore, only in case of necessity.”‡

Dr. WHITBY. “It being so expressly declared here” (Rom. vi. 4.) “and Col. ii. 12, that we are *buried with Christ in baptism*, by being buried under water, and the argument to oblige us to a conformity to his death, by dying to sin, being taken hence; *and this immersion being religiously observed by all christians, for thirteen centuries*, and approved by our church; and the change of it into sprinkling, even without any allowance from the

* *Epist. ad Fabium*, apud Euseb. *Hist. Eccles.* L. vi. C. xliii.

† Note in Euseb. *Hist. Eccles.* B. vi. C. xliii. Camb. 1683.

‡ *Hist. Eccles.* Secul. vi. § 251.

Author of this institution, or any license from any council of the church, being that which the Romanist still urgeth to justify his refusal of the cup to the laity ; it were to be wished, that this custom might be again of general use, and aspersion only permitted, as of old, in case of the *clinici*, or in present danger of death.”*

Mr. STACKHOUSE. “Accordingly, several authors have shewn, that we read no where in scripture, of any one’s being baptized but by immersion ; and from the acts of councils, and ancient rituals, have proved, that this manner of immersion continued, as much as possible, to be used, for *thirteen hundred years* after Christ.”†

Dr. WALL. “France seems to have been the first country in the world, where baptism, by affusion, was used ordinarily to persons in health, and in the public way of administering it.—It being allowed to weak children” (in the reign of Queen Elizabeth)—“to be baptized by aspersion, many fond ladies and gentlewomen first, and then, by degrees, the common people, would obtain the favour of the priest, to have their children pass for weak children, too tender to endure dipping in the water.—As for sprinkling, properly called, it seems it was, at sixteen hundred and forty-five, just then beginning, and used by very few. It must have begun, in the disorderly times, after forty-one.—They” (the assembly of divines in Westminster) “reformed the font into a basin. This learned assembly could not remember, that fonts to baptize in had been always used by the primitive christians, long before the beginning of popery, and ever since churches were built ; but that sprinkling, for the common use of baptizing, was really introduced (in France first, and then in other popish countries,) in times of popery. *And that, accordingly, all those countries, in which the usurped power of the pope is, or has formerly been owned, have left off dipping of children in the font ; but that all other coun-*

* Note on Rom. vi. 4.

† *Hist. of the Bible*, B. viii. C. i.

tries in the world, which had never regarded his authority, do still use it ; and that basins, except in cases of necessity, were never used by papists, or any other christians whatsoever, till by themselves."*

"The way, that is now ordinarily used, *we cannot deny to have been a novelty*, brought into this church, by those that had learned it in Germany, or at Geneva. And they were not contented to follow the example of pouring a quantity of water (which had there been introduced instead of immersion,) but improved it, if I may so abuse that word, from pouring to sprinkling ; that it might have as little resemblance of the ancient way of baptizing, as possible."†

Let me conclude this part of the discourse, with one remark. The question which we have examined, evidently relates, not to the *mode*, but the *nature* of baptism. We have not been inquiring, *how baptism must be performed, in order to be valid* ; but simply, *what baptism is*. If the several considerations, which have been presented, are sufficient to shew, that baptism is immersion, it is equally clear that the terms *baptism* and *immersion* are equivalent and interchangeable, and that when Christ commanded his disciples to be baptized, he commanded them to be immersed.

II. *To whom is baptism to be administered?*

The words of the commission are, *Go ye, therefore, and teach* (or rather *disciple*) *all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*‡ Is there any difficulty in understanding these plain instructions? Did not Christ obviously intend, that the apostles should make disciples from among all nations, and then baptize them? He surely did not intend, that they should baptize whole nations indiscriminately ; but those of the nations who should

* *Hist. of Inf. Bap.* Part ii C. ix.

† *Def. of Hist. of Inf. Bap.* p. 403.

‡ According to the Greek,

become disciples.* This is confirmed by the terms of the commission, as recorded by Mark : “ Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. *He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved.*”†

Notwithstanding the obvious import of the law of baptism, the greater part of the christian world baptize the children of believers, on the faith of their parents, or the profession of their sponsors, and refuse baptism to believers, if they have been baptized in infancy. Does their practice appear consistent with the command of Christ ? Christ commands those who believe, to be baptized. Pædobaptists adopt a system, which tends to preclude the baptism of believers. They baptize the involuntary infant, and deprive him of the privilege of ever professing his faith in the appointed way. If this system were universally adopted, it would banish believers’ baptism out of the world. But leaving the evident discordance, between the system of the Pædobaptists, and the command of Christ, let us inquire, whether infant baptism has any just support, either direct or inferential.

When any practice is proposed and enforced as binding duty, we have a right to examine the grounds of the alleged obligation. It is not sufficient for the proposer to show, that the practice is innocent, or even compatible with every other duty : it is necessary, that

* Dr. CAMPBELL. “ *Go, therefore, convert all the nations, baptizing them,*” &c. “ There are manifestly three things, which our Lord here distinctly enjoins his apostles to execute, with regard to the nations ; to wit *μαθητεύειν, βαπτίζειν, διδάσκειν*, that is, to convert them to the faith, to initiate the converts into the church by baptism, and to instruct the baptized in all the duties of the christian life.” *Four Gospels, and Note on the place.*

Mr. BAXTER. “ *Go, disciple me all nations, baptizing them.* As for those that say, they are disciplined by baptizing, and not before baptizing, they speak not the sense of that text.—When Christ layeth down, in the apostolical commission, the nature and order of his apostles’ work, it is first to make disciples, and then to baptize them into the name of the Father,” &c. *Disputat. of Right to Sacram.* p. 91, &c.

† Mark xvi. 15, 16.

he prove it binding. If one should enforce the ancient custom of wearing white garments, for several days after baptism, as the duty of every christian, it would not be necessary for us to urge one argument against it; nor would it be sufficient for him to prove it innocent, or even compatible with every other duty. We might reasonably refuse compliance, until he should prove, that we are bound to comply. So, in the case of infant baptism, it is not necessary for us to urge one argument against it; nor is it sufficient for the proposer to prove, that every objection is groundless. The thing requisite is clear evidence, that it is a binding duty. The question with every parent ought to be, Am I under obligation to have my children baptized? Now, on what grounds is this obligation predicated?

We should naturally expect that the baptism of infants, if enjoined at all, would have been enjoined in the law, which instituted the ordinance of christian baptism. But this law is silent on the subject of infants. Has not Christ, however, left some other command, enjoining infant baptism? Not one. Have not the apostles, who were entrusted with farther communications of the will of Christ, left some command on this subject? Not one. Have they not left us some example of infant baptism? Not one. Have they not spoken of baptized infants, and thus given undeniable intimation of this practice? No, in no instance. On the contrary, whenever they have spoken of baptism, or of those to whom it was administered, their language implies, that baptism was a voluntary act of worship, and the baptized, professing believers. "As many of you," said Paul to the Galatians, "as have been baptized into Christ, *have put on Christ.*" Gal. iii. 27.

But does not the baptism of the *households* of Lydia, the jailer and Stephanas, afford some evidence in favour of this practice?

As the term, *household*, does not necessarily imply infants, these instances, though admitted without exam-

ination, cannot be considered, as furnishing any certain precedent, in favour of the baptism of infants. Do they afford any presumptive evidence?

It appears, that Lydia was a woman of Thyatira, residing in Philippi, for the purpose of trade.* It does not appear, that she had a husband or children. It is more probable, that her household was composed of assistants in her business, who, following her example, believed and were baptized. For we are informed, that when Paul and Silas left the city, they entered into the house of Lydia, and saw and comforted *the brethren*.†

In the case of the jailer,‡ Paul and Silas “spake unto him the word of the Lord, and *to all that were in his house*.” And he “rejoiced, believing in God, *with all his house*.”§

Concerning the household of Stephanas, Paul writes, at the close of the epistle,§ “that it is the first-fruits of Achaia, and *that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints*.”¶

Thus, in each of these instances, especially in the two latter, some circumstances appear, which lead us to conclude, that the members of these households were professing believers. It may, therefore, be repeated, *that there is no precept nor precedent in scripture, for infant baptism.*

* Acts xvi. 14, 15. † Acts xvi. 40. ‡ Acts xvi. 23—34.

|| Dr. MACKNIGHT. “*Having believed in God with all his house*; who, it seems, were equally impressed with Paul’s sermon, as the jailer himself was.” *Life of the Apostle Paul*, Chap. v.

CALVIN.—“in which also the grace of God illustriously appeared, because it suddenly brought the whole family to a pious consent.” *Comment. in loc.*

§ 1 Cor. xvi. 15.

¶ Dr. MACKNIGHT. “The family of Stephanas seem all to have been adults, when they were baptized. For they are said, chap. xvi. 15, *to have devoted themselves to the ministry to the saints*.” *Translation of the Apost. Epist.* Note 1st. on 1 Cor i. 16.

DR. GUYSE. “It therefore seems—that the family of Stephanas were all adult believers, and so were baptized upon their own personal profession of faith in Christ.” *Note, on 1 Cor. i. 16.*

Let us next examine the inferential evidence, adduced in favour of this practice.

*Children, it is said, have been connected with their parents, in covenant with God, and in consequence of this connexion, have received, by divine appointment, the initiating seal ; their covenant connexion has never been dissolved, nor their right to the initiating seal disannulled.**

It does not follow, that children are connected with their parents in every covenant, because they were connected with their parents in one covenant. The whole strength of the argument, now presented, rests in the supposition, that the covenant of grace, in which christians now stand, is the same with the covenant of circumcision, in which children were connected with their parents. The latter covenant is recorded in the seventeenth chapter of Genesis.

“And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God ; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face ; and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be called Abraham ; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession ; and I will be their God. And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant, therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee, in their generations.

* See Dr. WORCESTER's *Letters to Dr. Baldwin*, lct. xxi. p. 3.

This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you, and thy seed after thee : Every man child among you shall be circumeised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin ; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old, shall be circumeised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised ; and my covenant shall be in your flesh, for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man child, whose flesh of his foreskin, is not circumeised, that soul shall be cut off from his people ; he hath broken my covenant." The covenant proceeds, with regard to Sarah and Ishmael, and closes in the twenty-second verse.

I now ask the christian parent, Is this the covenant, which God has made with you ? Has God covenanted to give you *these* blessings ? Though he may have covenanted to give you some of these blessings, together with many others, the question must be repeated, *Is this the very covenant which God has made with you ?* If, on examining the several parts of the covenant, you feel authorized to answer in the affirmative, I reply, You are under sacred obligations to perform your part. You are under sacred obligation to circumcise, or (if you are satisfied, that baptism is substituted) to baptize "every man child" "that is eight days old ;" him "that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed." It is in direct disobedience of the command of God, to baptize before the eighth day, or to defer baptism beyond the eighth day. It is an entire departure from the command of God, to baptize a female child, or to withhold baptism from one "that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed." God has, in no part of his word, released you from your obligation to baptize *on the eighth day*. Nor has he required you to baptize a female child. "Who hath required this at your

hand?" Nor has he released you from your obligation to baptize the servant, born in the house, or bought with money.*

But I ask again, Do you really believe, that God has promised to you the very blessings, which he promised to Abraham and his seed? Do you really believe, that God has promised to give you the land of Canaan, *even that land, in which your father Abraham was a stranger?* If not, whatever blessings God has promised to you, whatever covenant he has made with you, it is not *the* covenant, which he made with Abraham, and in which children were connected with parents.

* Gal. iii. 28. *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.* This passage has been produced both as a declaration of the right of female infants to baptism, and as a repeal of the right of servants.

It is important, in construing scripture, to adopt the very meaning, which the inspired writer obviously intended to convey; and not to suffer the mind to lay hold on some distant meaning, which is contrary to the whole scope of the context, and probably, would never have occurred, had not an hypothesis needed its support. If the latter licentious mode of interpretation be tolerated, any doctrine, however trifling or contradictory, any practice, however puerile or pernicious, may be proved to be scriptural.

In the passage before us, let us ascertain, what characters are described, and in what respect, they are one in Christ Jesus.

Ver. 26. *For ye are all the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus.* 27. *For as many of you, as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.* 28. *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.* Is it not too evident to require any remark, that the apostle is speaking of believers only, such as are the children of God by faith in Christ, and have put on Christ by being baptized?

2 The Galatians, through the influence of Judaizing teachers, had imbibed the error, that in order to be justified, it was necessary to be circumcised, and to keep the Mosaic law. The chief object of the apostle, in this epistle, and particularly in this chapter, is to show, that we must be justified by faith alone; that it is not necessary to become a Jew, in order to be justified; for in Christ Jesus, no distinction of nation, outward condition, or sex, is of any avail. In Christ Jesus, there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female. *If ye have faith in Christ, whatever be your descent or condition, ye are all on an equality, in point of acceptance with God.*

That the promise of the land of Canaan, was, at least, one principal promise, in the covenant of circumcision, appears from the numerous passages, in which it is distinguished and presented, as the substance of the covenant.

God said to Moses, “ I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob—and I have also established my covenant with them, *to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers.*”* David exhorted Israel; “ O ye seed of Israel his servant, ye children of Jacob, his chosen ones.—Be ye mindful always of his covenant; the word which he commanded to a thousand generations; even of the covenant, which he made with Abraham, and of his oath unto Isaac; and hath confirmed the same to Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant, saying, *Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance.*”† The same sentiment prevailed in the time of Nehemiah; for on a day of fasting, the whole congregation of Israel addressed God in prayer; “ Thou art the Lord the God, who didst choose Abram—and madest a covenant with him, *to give the land of the Canaanites—to his seed.*”‡

The covenant of grace does not contain this promise. When we contemplate two covenants, and see that one principal article, contained in the one, is not contained in the other, by what singular process, can the mind be brought to the conclusion, that these two covenants, so palpably different and distinct, are one and the same?

But it is urged, that “ the covenant made with Abraham, is expressly declared to be an everlasting, or perpetual covenant; a covenant to continue to the latest generations.”§

And was not the land of Canaan given to Abraham and his seed, for an “ *everlasting possession?*” Even when the covenant is represented as “ the word, which

* Exod. vi. 3, 4. † 1 Chron. xvi. 13—18. ‡ Neh. ix. 7, 8.

§ Dr. WORCESTER'S *Two Discourses*, Disc. 1. p. 27.

God commanded *to a thousand generations*," the promise of the land of Canaan is brought forward, as the chief thing, yea, as the very sum and substance of this everlasting covenant.

So also the priesthood was confirmed to Phinehas and *his seed*, in an *everlasting* covenant.* So also the feast of expiation, on the tenth day of the seventh month, was established by a statute, which was declared to be an *everlasting* statute.†

It is urged, that the covenant "comprised all the blessings and privileges ever promised to believers and the church."

Whether this be true or not, since it comprised one blessing, which is not comprised in the covenant of grace, it cannot be the same covenant. But is it true?

The two principal promises made to the seed of Abraham, are, that God would give them the land of Canaan, and that he would be their God. What is the import of the latter promise?

Is there any absurdity in saying, that God was the God, not only of the few pious descendants of Abraham, but of the nation of Israel at large? Was he not the God of the Jews, in a sense, in which he was not the God of the Gentiles? Did he not select the posterity of Abraham, in the line of Isaac and Jacob, and distinguish them above all other nations? Did he not protect them from their enemies, and grant them a rich abundance of temporal blessings? Did he not give them his law, and establish among them his worship, and the ordinances of his house? Did he not, by these spiritual advantages, furnish them with opportunities, which no other nation enjoyed, of obtaining him, as their spiritual portion? Is there any absurdity in saying, that, in these respects, he was the God of the nation at large? If not, is there any absurdity in supposing, that his promise imported, that he would be their God, in these respects?

* Num. xxv. 13.

† Lev. xvi. 34.

God is represented, in the scriptures, as the God of his people, in different senses. When, in the new covenant, he promises to put his laws in their mind, and to write them in their hearts, and to be to them a God,* the promised renewal of heart shows, that the latter promise imports that he will be the *spiritual* portion of his people. When in the Revelation, it is promised, that God will be with men, and be their God,† the connexion shows, that the promise imports, that he will be their *eternal* portion. When, in the covenant of circumcision, he promised to be the God of the seed of Abraham, the connexion of this promise with other promises, and the manner of fulfilment, show, that the promise imported, that he would multiply and protect them; that he would grant them an abundance of temporal blessings; and that he would distinguish them above all other nations, by spiritual advantages.

The seed, to which the land of Canaan was promised, was, most evidently, the lineal descendants of Abraham. To the same seed, the Lord promised to be a God. Mark the terms of the promises: "I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be *their* God." But he was not their God, in a spiritual sense. It appears from their history, that, in every age, a remnant only were truly pious.

Those who maintain, that he promised to be the spiritual portion of the seed of Abraham, are obliged to explain the promise to mean, that God would be the God of *some* of the seed of Abraham. Is this a fair explanation? Is it not using undue freedom with the word of God? Is it not indeed a frittering away of the plain import of scripture?

Suppose that a king should promise peculiar privileges, to a faithful subject and his posterity; not *all* or

* Heb. viii. 10.

† Rev. xxi. 3.

some, but simply his posterity. Would not the subject be authorized to expect, that all his posterity would enjoy these privileges? Suppose that it should appear, that the king actually conferred certain peculiar privileges, on all the posterity, excepting those who refused his kindness. Suppose, farther, that it should appear, that the king had selected, from among his subjects, a number, in which were some of the posterity of the faithful subject, and raised them to nobility. Would there be any doubt, concerning the import of the king's promise to his faithful subject? Could it be urged, with any appearance of probability, that, when he promised peculiar privileges, to the posterity of this subject, he did not intend those which he actually conferred on them, but that nobility, which he conferred on a very few of them?

God covenanted to give the land of Canaan and his favour, to the posterity of Abraham, in the line of Isaac. That his posterity were not to come into immediate possession of the land, had been previously stipulated.* God faithfully performed his promises. He conferred the blessings promised, on the posterity of Abraham, in the line of Isaac, excepting those only, who rejected his kindness. A refusal to accept a promised favour, always releases the promiser from his obligation. Esau and his posterity, as well as many of the posterity of Jacob, refused to accept the Lord as their God; not merely refused to accept him, as their spiritual portion, but refused to accept him, as their God in the sense promised. They acknowledged and worshipped other gods. The Israelites frequently forsook God; and he as frequently forsook them. But when they repented and returned to him, he remembered his covenant, and delivered them from their distresses. At length, they rejected him, in the most decided manner, by rejecting his Son. They would not have him to reign over them. Since that time, God has forsaken

* Gen. xv. 13—16.

them. But when they shall repent and return, God will again remember his covenant. The manner, however, in which he will restore his favour, though intimated in the prophecies, can be learned from the event only.

What is the ground taken by the advocates of the covenant of circumcision? Do they say, that God promised to be the God of Abraham's seed, in a spiritual sense, *if they accepted the promise*? "This would be a complete abandonment of their argument. For it would place such, as claim interest in the covenant of circumcision, exactly upon a level with all others. God has engaged to save all who reverence, worship and obey him, though Abraham be ignorant of them, and Israel acknowledge them not."

Do they say, that the promise imported, "that, *on condition of faith and fidelity on Abraham's part, in respect to his children*, they should become subjects of grace, and heirs of the blessings of the covenant?"*

But have we a right to make conditions, which God has not made? Have we a right to take his covenant, and fashion it to suit our preconceived, favourite sentiments? God did not promise, I will be a God to thy seed, on condition of faith and fidelity on thy part, in respect to thy seed. Neither in this covenant, nor in any of his communications with Abraham, did God inform him, that the grand condition, on which he would be a God to his seed, was *fidelity on his part, in respect to his seed*.†

* Dr. WORCESTER's *Two Discourses*, Disc. 1, p. 36.

† Gen. xviii. 19. *For I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.* Much stress has been laid on the auxiliary *shall*, as implying an engagement to the family of Abraham, in consequence of his fidelity in instructing them. In the original, the grammatical construction of the verb *יִשְׁמְרוּ*, rendered *they shall keep*, is precisely of the same import, as the grammatical construction of the preceding verb *יִצְוֶה*, rendered *he will command*. No reason, therefore, can be given,

But it is said, that, in this covenant, God required Abraham *to walk before him, and to be perfect.*

Is this a condition of the covenant? Did God suspend the performance of his promises, on the perfection of Abraham? Surely, then, this was not the covenant of grace. Under the new dispensation, we are indeed commanded to love God with all the heart, and to be perfect in holiness. God requires this of all mankind under every dispensation. It would be derogatory to his character to require less. But this is not a *condition* of the covenant of grace. The blessings of the covenant are not suspended on such a condition. If we are interested in Christ by faith, notwithstanding our imperfections and sins, God will be our God *through grace.* Yet the author above-cited says, "To become entitled to the blessings of the covenant, Abraham must walk before God, and be perfect."* If so, this covenant was certainly not the covenant of grace. It might be expected, therefore, that the advocates of this covenant would, for the sake of their own cause, readily admit, and strenuously maintain, what appears to be the fact, that this requirement was not a condition of the covenant, or even a part of the covenant, but merely a preamble or introduction to the covenant. God introduces the solemn transaction, by saying, *Walk before me, and be thou perfect.* Then follows, *I will make my covenant with thee.* Then are presented the terms of the covenant; first, the part which God would perform, consisting in the bestowment of several blessings on Abraham, and his seed; and secondly, the part which

why the verbs should not be constructed similarly in the translation. For the same reason, that the preceding verb is rendered *will command*, ought the following to be rendered *will keep.* This passage appears to contain a prediction, rather than an engagement. God foresaw that Abraham would be faithful in instructing his family; that they would observe the requirements taught them; and that, with a view to this obedience, both on the part of Abraham, and his family, he might bestow on them the promised blessings.

* *Ibid*, p. 34.

Abraham and his seed were to perform, consisting in the observance of the rite of circumcision; and lastly, several explanatory and restricting articles, with regard to Sarah and Ishmael and Isaac. That the observance of the rite of circumcision, was, emphatically, *the condition* of this covenant, appears from the manner in which it is presented, the conspicuous place which it holds in the covenant, and the penalty attached to its neglect. "And the uncircumcised man child—shall be cut off from his people; *he hath broken my covenant.*"

It is a popular and prevailing sentiment, that this promise imports, that so many of the seed shall be subjects of grace, that the church shall be perpetuated "*in the line of natural descent.*"

Is this hypothesis consistent with facts? Has not God transferred the church from the posterity of Abraham to the Gentiles? Is it said that the Jews were rejected because of unbelief? But has not God the hearts of all in his hand? and had he not, on this hypothesis, promised, that the church should be perpetuated in the posterity of Abraham? Why, then, did he not perform? But this is not the only transfer. If the christian church is the same with the Jewish, and if the same promises are made to the former, as were made to the latter, may it not be asked, Where are the descendants of the once flourishing churches, in the north of Africa? Where are the descendants of all the Asiatic churches, planted by the apostles themselves? They are now covered with the darkness of Mahomedan superstition. Surely, we are not there to look for the church of Christ. This church is now transferred to the west of Europe, and embraces the descendants of those, who were bowing down to idols of wood and stone, during the prosperity of the eastern churches.

It is true, that God regards the prayers of pious parents, for their offspring, and frequently grants his blessing on their religious instructions. We may, therefore, expect, that, in places where the truth has prevailed, a pious seed will be preserved for some genera-

tions. But that this is God's uniform mode of operation, or that he has covenanted to perpetuate the church, *in the line of natural descent*, a slight glance at ecclesiastical history must effectually disprove.

Let us next consider several passages in the New Testament, in which it has been supposed, that the covenant of circumcision is recognized, as the covenant of grace.

On the day of Pentecost, Peter addressed the Jews; "The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."* The expression, *unto you and to your children*, resembling the expression, *unto thee and to thy seed*, used in the covenant of circumcision, has occasioned the supposition, that this is a repetition of one of the promises, contained in that covenant. There were several promises made to Abraham and his seed. Does the context lead us to suppose, that Peter intended one, rather than another? Or was one of the promises called, by way of eminence, *the promise*? Is it probable, that Peter alluded to one of the promises in this covenant, calling it *the promise*, when, through his whole discourse, he had not spoken of Abraham, or of any covenant made with him? Is it not probable—is it not certain, that he alluded to the promise, concerning which he had been discoursing from the first?

The Jews were astonished at the pouring out of the Spirit on the disciples. Peter states the event, as a fulfilment of the promise, spoken by the prophet Joel: "And it shall come to pass, in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and *your sons and your daughters* shall prophesy," &c.†

In the progress of the discourse, he says, that Jesus, having received of the Father *the promise of the Holy Ghost*, hath shed forth this; and finally, he exhorts them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive *the gift of the Holy Ghost*. For the prom-

* Acts ii. 39.

† Ver. 17.

ise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." More summarily, thus ; God said, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, even on your sons and daughters ; Jesus hath received this promise, and begun to perform it, by shedding forth this on us, his disciples ; repent ye, therefore, and ye shall receive the same gift ; the Spirit shall be poured out on you ; for the same promise is made to you and to your children, &c.*

In the epistle to the Galatians, it is written, " If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."†

Let us inquire, what is implied in believers' being the seed of Abraham ; and what promise is here intended.

In the context (ver. 6, 7,) it is written, " Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness : Know ye, therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." Abraham believed ; therefore, they who believe, are his children. This is perfectly in the style of scripture. The unbelieving Jews are called children of the devil, because they were like the devil, in their character and conduct. On the same principle, the profligate are called children of Belial ; and men are called children of light, and children of disobedience, according to their respective characters. It is on this principle, that believers are called the children of Abraham. They are like Abraham, in their character and conduct. They have the faith of Abraham. " And if children, then heirs." Accordingly, the apostle continues, " And the scripture, foreseeing, that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, *In*

* In this explanation of the promise, I am happy to agree with WITSIUS, *Exercitat. in Symb.* Exercit. xi. § 19 ; LIMBORCH, *Comment. in loc.* VENEMA, *Dissertat. Sac.* L. iii. C. iv. § 7, 8 ; Dr. OWEN, *Doct. of Saints Perseverance*, p. 116 ; Dr. HAMMOND, *Works*, Vol. i. p. 490 ; Dr. WHITBY, *Annot.* on the place ; and Dr. DODDRIDGE, *Note*, on the place.

† Gal. iii. 29.

thee shall all nations be blessed. So then, they which be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham." And again, (ver. 14,) "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles, through Jesus Christ." And in the last verse, "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

There can be no doubt, that the blessing, of which believers are heirs, is justification by faith; and that the promise, according to which they are heirs of this blessing, is the *gospel promise* made to Abraham. If, says the apostle, ye have the faith of Abraham, ye are, *therefore*, his children; and as Abraham was justified, by having his faith accounted for righteousness; and as the blessing of Abraham is come on the Gentiles, through Jesus Christ, so that they who are of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham, being heirs of the blessing contained in the promise, In thee shall all nations be blessed; ye, believing Gentiles, according to this promise, are justified by having your faith accounted for righteousness.*

* Dr. MACKNIGHT. on Gal. iii. 16. *Translation.* "Now, to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed. (See ver. 19) He doth not say, And in seeds, as concerning many, but as concerning one person, And in thy seed, who is Christ."

Note. "He does not say, And in seeds. So τοῖς σπέρμασι should be translated, the preposition *ἐν* being understood here, as is plain from the promise itself, Gen. xxii. 18. *And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed* † The apostle having affirmed, ver. 15, that, according to the customs of men, none but the parties themselves, can set aside or alter a covenant that is ratified, he observes, in this verse, that the promises in the covenant with Abraham, were made to him and to his seed. The promise to Abraham is that recorded, Gen. xii. 3. *In thee shall all the families, LXX. πασαι αἱ φυλαι, all the tribes, of the earth be blessed.* The promise to his seed is that recorded, Gen. xxii. 18. *And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.* See ver. 19. Now since by the oath which God sware to Abraham, after he had laid Isaac on the altar, both promises were ratified, the apostle reasons justly, when he affirms, that both promises must be fulfilled. And having shown, ver. 9, that the promise to Abraham to bless all the families of the earth in him, means their being blessed, as Abraham had been, not with justification through the law of Moses,

† See Acts iii. 25; also LUTHER'S *Comment. on Galatians*, p. 307.

The same sentiments are contained in the epistle to the Romans: "For we say, that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith, which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised: that righteousness might be imputed unto them also."* *He received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith, which he had yet being uncircumcised.* The meaning of the apostle cannot be, that Abraham performed circumcision on himself and family, and thus *sealed his faith*, or attested his faith, as believers seal or attest their faith by solemn acts of worship. Not his faith, but the righteousness of his faith, was sealed. Man may seal or attest his faith, by acts of worship and obedience; none but God, can seal the righteousness of faith. None but God, can declare faith imputable for righteousness. Abraham received the sign of circumcision, as a divine attestation of the righteousness of his faith; or, in the words of Stephen, "God gave him the covenant of circumcision,"† and thus sealed

as the Jews affirmed, but with justification by faith, he proceeds, in this passage, to consider the promise made to Abraham's seed, that in it likewise, all the nations of the earth should be blessed. And from the words of the promise, which are not, *and in thy seeds*, but *in thy seed*, he argues that the seed, in which the nations of the earth should be blessed, is not Abraham's seed in general, but one of his seed in particular, namely, Christ; who, by dying for all nations, hath delivered them from the curse of the law, that the blessing of justification by faith might come on believers of all nations, through Christ, as was promised to Abraham and to Christ."

Dr. GUYSE. "The covenant that I have given a hint of, (ver. 8, 9, 14,) relating to the way of our being accepted of God as righteous, consisted of a free promise, which, because of its vast comprehension of blessings, and of its being first made to Abraham, and afterwards repeated to him, and to Isaac, (Gen. xii. 3 and xxii. 18, and xxvi. 4,) may be called *the promises.*" *Paraphrase on Gal. iii. 16.*

* Rom. iv. 9—11.

† Acts vii. 8.

the righteousness of his faith, or declared, that his faith was accounted for righteousness. Still farther, God attested the righteousness of that faith, which Abraham had *in uncircumcision*, and thus established him the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also. Had not the righteousness of *this* faith been attested, it might have been doubted, whether Abraham was the father of any, but circumcised believers, and whether the faith of any others would be imputed for righteousness. But God attested the righteousness of that faith, which he had in uncircumcision, and thus proved, that it is not so much circumcision, as faith, that makes us children of Abraham; and consequently (for if children, then heirs,) that, if we have his faith, though we be not circumcised, our faith, like his, will be imputed for righteousness, and thus we become heirs of the blessing of justification by faith, according to the promise, made to Abraham, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

This gospel promise, an ever memorable charter of all the blessings which Jewish and Gentile believers enjoy through Christ, is not contained in the covenant of circumcision, but in a covenant made with Abraham, at the time of his calling, twenty-four years before, and recorded in the twelfth chapter of Genesis.* This covenant was confirmed by Abraham, by an oath, when he offered up Isaac;† “that by two immutable things,” a promise and an oath, “in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation.”‡ This covenant was renewed to Isaac and Jacob, together with the covenant of circumcision.§ This is the covenant, which the apostle Peter, “on the bright morning of the gospel day,” presented in these words: “Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant, which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, *And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be bless-*

* Ver. 2, 3. † Gen. xxii. 16—18. ‡ Heb. vi. 18.

§ Gen. xxvi. 3, 4, and xxviii. 13, 14.

ed.”* This is the covenant, which being “confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after,” and we may add, the covenant of circumcision, which was twenty-four years after, “cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.”†

But it will be said, that in the fourth of Romans, we find an incontestible application of one of the promises in the covenant of circumcision. The apostle represents Abraham’s being the father of believers, as a fulfilment of the promise, that he should be a father of many nations.”‡

The New Testament writers frequently apply historical and prophetical passages of the Old Testament, in a secondary sense, without giving any intimation of their primary import. The Lord said, by the prophet Hosea, “When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.”§ This is applied, by an evangelist, to the return of Jesus from Egypt, without any intimation of its primary import.|| The Jews were commanded not to break a bone of the paschal lamb.¶ This is applied, by another evangelist, directly to Jesus, without any intimation of its primary import.** In the case before us, God constituted Abraham a father of many nations. This is applied, by an apostle, to Abraham’s being the father of all believers, without any intimation of its primary import and fulfilment.

These instances illustrate the principle, on which the New Testament frequently proceeds, in applying events and predictions, recorded in the Old Testament. We are to use their application, with proper caution. We are not to extend the parallel between the type and the antitype, farther than we are authorized by the inspired penmen.

When the evangelist represents the return of Jesus from Egypt, as a fulfilment of that which was spoken

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* Acts iii. 25. † Gal. iii. 17. ‡ Ver. 17. § Hos. xi. 1.

¶ Matt. ii. 15. ¶¶ Exod. xii. 46. ** John xix. 36.

by the Lord, "Out of Egypt have I called my son," he recognizes some kind of identity between Jesus and the people of Israel. When the apostle represents the relation between believers and Abraham, as a fulfilment of that which was spoken to Abraham, "A father of many nations have I made thee," he recognizes some kind of identity between the posterity of Abraham and believers. In both cases, the recognition of identity is of the same kind, and to the same extent. But we do not infer, from the former application, that Jesus and Israel are the same, in any other respect, than that they both are sons of God, though in very different senses, and were both called out of Egypt. Nor from the latter, are we to infer, that believers and the posterity of Abraham are the same, in any other respect, than that they both have Abraham for a father, though in very different senses; the one, on account of natural descent, the other, on account of faith. We instantly discover the impropriety of extending the parallel between Israel and Jesus, or of reasoning from the former to the latter: And is it not as evidently improper to extend the parallel between the posterity of Abraham and believers? or to infer that the latter are under the same regulations, or in the same covenant, as the former?

Though the evangelist John presents the fact, that the soldiers broke not the legs of Christ, as a fulfilment of the prophecy, implied in the command, respecting the paschal lamb, "Neither shall ye break a bone thereof," and thus, in the most unequivocal manner, recognizes an identity between the paschal lamb and Christ, yet we do not hesitate to infer, that the lamb was merely a type of Christ. And we do not feel authorized to reason from the type to the anti-type. We do not conclude, that Christ is subject to the same rules of treatment, as the paschal lamb; or that those who partake of Christ, are bound, by the Mosaic ritual, to use the same ceremonies, as the Jews, in partaking of the paschal lamb. Yet this

may be proved, by the same kind of reasoning, as it can be proved, from the allusion of the apostle; under consideration, that believers are subject to the same regulations, or are in the same covenant, as the posterity of Abraham. But, in the words of Dr. Scott, when speaking of another instance of "forcing figurative language into a literal meaning, and so grounding doctrines upon it," "common sense is usually sufficient to preserve men from such absurdities, when there is no personal or party interest to serve by them."*

Let me now call your attention to the important fact, that, with regard to the Gentiles, the token of the covenant of circumcision has been forbidden.

When certain Jews from Jerusalem taught the believing Gentiles at Antioch, that except they were circumcised after the manner of Moses, they could not be saved, the council of Apostles and elders, assembled in Jerusalem, under the special direction of the Holy Spirit, wrote and concluded, that the brethren "observe no such thing."† Accordingly, Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "Is any man called in uncircumcision, let him not be circumcised;"‡ and to the Galatians, "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing."§

Is not the prohibition of the token of a covenant, an explicit declaration, that the covenant is abolished?

God instituted the rite of circumcision, to be the token of a certain covenant, which he made with Abraham and his seed, and declared, at the same time, that he who did not receive the token, had broken the covenant. Such a token is one species of language. Wherever it appears, it conveys an idea of what it was instituted to represent. The language of the rainbow is, There will never again be a deluge. The language of the sign of circumcision is, Such a covenant exists between the seed

* Note on 1 Cor. x. 4.

† Acts xv. 1—31 and xxi. 25.

‡ 1 Cor. vii. 18.

§ Gal. v. 2.

of Abraham and God. After this language has been allowed for several centuries, to the natural and also to the adopted seed, it is finally, with regard to the Gentiles, expressly forbidden. God says, Let this language be no longer used; let it be no longer said, that such a covenant exists between me and any Gentile.

It is urged, that though the rite of circumcision is abolished, the rite of baptism is substituted, as a token of the same import.

But if this be true, should we not expect to find baptism enjoined, when circumcision is forbidden? Should we not expect to find this substitution clearly stated in scripture? Yet, in no instance where circumcision is forbidden, is there any intimation of baptism. Nor is this substitution mentioned in any passage, through the whole of the New Testament. It is not mentioned, nor even intimated, in those instances, where, had it been really made, the circumstances render the omission perfectly unaccountable. Notwithstanding the Judaizing teachers greatly complained, that circumcision was not enforced on the Gentiles, the substitution of baptism, which would have furnished a complete answer, was never suggested by the apostles. Notwithstanding the Galatians had imbibed a belief of the necessity of circumcision, and Paul wrote an epistle expressly to correct their mistake, yet, throughout this epistle, no distant intimation is given of the very thing, which must have completely satisfied their minds, and silenced all opposition.

On the contrary, so far were the Jewish converts from believing in this substitution, that even after they were commanded to be baptized themselves, though already circumcised, they continued, under the direction of the apostles, to circumcise their children. The elders at Jerusalem said to Paul, The Jews that are zealous of the law, "are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews, which are among the Gentiles, to forsake Moses, saying, that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.—Do, therefore, this

that we say to thee,—*that all may know, that those things, whereof they are informed concerning thee, are nothing.*”*

But as the substitution of baptism in the place of circumcision is generally considered absolutely essential to the Pædobaptist cause, you will naturally presume, that though the scripture is silent on the subject, and though facts recorded in scripture are adverse to the supposition, still something plausible can be urged in its favour. Let me, therefore, present to your view, accompanied with a few remarks, *the four arguments*, which a late distinguished writer has advanced, in proof of this substitution.*

“1. Baptism is now, as circumcision anciently was, an instituted pre-requisite to a regular standing in the visible church.”

Not to question the propriety of calling the Jewish and christian churches collectively the visible church, it is sufficient here to observe, that circumcision was not pre-requisite to a regular standing in the church; otherwise, females were not regular members.

“2. Baptism, under the present dispensation, is of the same significance, with circumcision under the ancient.” “As circumcision signified the renovation of the heart, or regeneration; so baptism signifies the same thing.”

But did circumcision, as it was commanded to be administered among the Jews, signify that the subject was regenerated? Surely not.

In all languages, terms which literally denote sensible objects, are sometimes figuratively used to convey ideas of spiritual objects. But we do not infer, that the former objects are signs of the latter. The term *heart*, which literally denotes a part of the body, is figuratively used, to denote the affections or the mind. But we do not infer, that the former is a sign of the latter. Circumcision, in the literal acceptation, separated the Jews from the Gentile world, and brought

* Acts. xxi. 20—24.

* Dr. WORCESTER, *Letters to Dr. Baldwin*, Let. xvi.

them into a state of relative holiness. Hence the term was figuratively used, to signify moral separation from the world, and real holiness of heart. But it is preposterous to infer, from this figurative use of the word, that circumcision signified regeneration.

Admitting, however, that circumcision and baptism are both significant of, regeneration, it does not follow, that *the general significance* of the two ordinances is the same, because there is a similarity of significance in one particular. Circumcision chiefly signified, that the subject was interested in that covenant, which God made with Abraham, and of which he expressly declared this ordinance to be the token. Baptism is represented, as an act of worship, by which the baptized profess the religion of Christ, and signify their fellowship with Christ, in death and resurrection, and their being washed from sin. How different the leading import of the two ordinances !

“3. Baptism, under the present dispensation, is a seal of the same thing, of which circumcision was a seal under the ancient. We have the express declaration of the apostle, that circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of faith.”—“Of the same righteousness of faith, baptism is now also a seal.”

God gave Abraham the sign of circumcision, and thus sealed the righteousness of the faith, which he had in uncircumcision. But the *performance* of this rite, though it might seal or attest the faith of an adult subject, could not attest the righteousness of his faith ; much less could it attest the righteousness of their faith, who never exercised any faith. That the *administration* of baptism can attest the righteousness of faith, is equally impossible. And that baptism is an attestation from God of the righteousness of faith, has been scarcely advanced, much less proved.

“4. That baptism has come in the place of circumcision, we are decisively taught, by the apostle, in Col. ii. 10—13. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power. In whom also ye are cir-

cumcised, with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ: buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him."

In this passage, we are taught, that the Colossians were spiritually circumcised, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, and spiritually baptized, by being buried with Christ, and being raised to newness of life.* Thus they are represented, as having passed the whole process of death, burial and resurrection. The death, the putting off of the body, is called circumcision, in allusion to the nature of that rite; and the burial and resurrection are fitly represented in the ordinance of baptism or immersion. But though some other explanation of the passage should be adopted, is it possible, since the apostle is speaking of *spiritual* circumcision and *spiritual* baptism, both of which had been received by the Colossians, to make out an inference, that external baptism has come in the place of external circumcision?

A view of these *four arguments* may serve to convince you, how little can be said in support of a point, which, on account of its importance in the Pædobaptist system, demands the fairest and most invincible proof; and may lead you to adopt the sentiment, contained in the following words of Dr. Emmons: "Can we justly conclude, that it is the duty of believers now to circumcise their children, or even to baptize them, because it was once their duty to circumcise them? The truth is, we must learn the peculiar duties of believers, under the present dispensation of the covenant of grace, from the dispensation itself, *which enjoins all the peculiar duties which belong to it.*"†

* See Rom. vi. 4.

† *Dissertation on the Qualifications for the christian sacraments*, Chap. ii. Sect. v.

By many Pœdobaptist writers, especially by the advocates of national churches, the argument from the Abrahamic or Jewish dispensation, is stated in a manner somewhat different from that which we have been considering.

Infants, they say, were constituted members of the visible church ; they have never been excluded from the church, and, consequently, are now members.

This argument, when analyzed, stands thus : Infants were constituted members of the Abrahamic or Jewish church ; they were never excluded from this church ; therefore, they are members of the christian church. Is this conclusive ? The whole strength of the argument rests in the supposition, that the christian church is the same with the Abrahamic or Jewish. How can this be proved ?

It cannot be proved, by showing, that they are founded on the same covenant ; for there is no evidence, that the covenant of circumcision is the same with the covenant of grace.

Nor can it be proved, by adducing promises and prophecies of the perpetuity of Zion, and her final triumph and glory. Some of these promises and prophecies relate to the final conversion and restoration of the Jewish people. Others evidently belong to the true church ; to that Zion, which includes all the saints, who existed before the organization of a visible church, and all the truly pious, whether they have belonged to any organized visible church or not. No one denies the perpetuity and identity of the church of God, to which the promises and prophecies belong. In order to make the application of these promises and prophecies bear on the subject, it is necessary to show, that they belong not to that church, which commenced in the persons of our first parents, and will continue to the end of the world, but to a particular organized body, which commenced in the family of Abraham.

Nor can the point be proved, from the apostle's discourse, concerning the olive tree, from which the Jews,

the natural branches, were broken off, and into which the believing Gentiles were ingrafted;* unless it be shown, that the olive tree represents that particular organized body, the Abrahamic or Jewish church, or in the words of Dr. Austin, "the society of Israel."

It is evident, that the olive tree cannot represent this body or society, as existing under the Sinai law, for Gentile believers are not introduced into a similar state. And is it not equally evident, that, for a similar reason, it cannot represent this body or society, as founded on the covenant of circumcision? The ingrafted branches are represented, as partaking of the root and fatness of the olive tree. But whatever blessings Gentile believers enjoy, they do not enjoy the peculiar blessings, secured in the covenant of circumcision. They do not inherit the land of Canaan, though that was one distinct, principal promise, in this covenant. Nor can it be admitted, that they enjoy the favour of God, in that sense, and in that only, in which it was engaged to the posterity of Abraham.† The olive tree cannot, therefore, represent the community of Israel, as founded on the covenant of circumcision; nor, for the same reason, can it represent the covenant itself.

Christ said to his disciples, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. *Every branch in me, that*

* Rom. xi. 16—24.

† Dr. AUSTIN. "The reinsertion of these broken off branches into the good olive tree (alluding to the restoration of the Jews,) can mean no less than their occupying the place, which they held, before they were broken off. Occupying this place, they necessarily partake of the fatness of the olive tree. This is the blessing, the entire blessing secured in the promise. But the land of Canaan is expressly a part of this blessing. Their being brought back then under the covenant, must necessarily restore them to the enjoyment of this land." *View of the Economy of the Church of God*, Chap. xiv. p. 305.

If this reasoning be correct, it follows, that Gentile believers cannot be considered as ingrafted into the olive tree, because they do not inherit the land of Canaan, which is expressly a part of the blessing, secured in the promise, and represented by the fatness of the olive.

beareth not fruit, he taketh away."* This may suggest the proper interpretation of the symbolical language of the apostle. The olive tree may represent the Messiah, as presented in the gospel promise made to Abraham, and in subsequent promises, in which all the pious cordially rested, and in which the Jews, as a nation, professed to rest. They are called natural branches, conformably to the language of the evangelist, "He came unto *his own*, and *his own* received him not."† The natural branches were unfruitful, and, therefore, according to the prediction of Christ, were taken away; or, in the style of the apostle, because of unbelief, they were broken off; and in their place, the believing Gentiles were ingrafted, and now partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree, the riches of grace in Jesus Christ.

Nor can it be proved, that the churches are the same, by showing, that they are alike in some respects. Much labour has been expended, in exhibiting those points, in which the churches are alike. But, surely, two things may be alike in many respects, and still not be the same. It is granted, that they are not alike in all respects. The very point, therefore, necessary to be proved, is that they are alike in that respect, which concerns the question. To ascertain, whether two institutions are alike in any one respect, we must form an idea of each, from all the information we can obtain, and compare the ideas.

On examining the scriptures, with regard to the Jewish church, we find, that it was *a select people*, composed chiefly of the posterity of Abraham, in the line of Isaac and Jacob. To be descended from Abraham, in this line, was sufficient *to introduce* the subject into the Jewish church. Persons of Gentile extraction also, who were purchased by Jews, or wished to enjoy the privileges of Jews, could be introduced into this church,

* John xv. 1, 2.

† John i. 11.

by circumcision.* Whether any other requisite to admission was appointed by God, we are not informed. This church continued nearly two thousand years. At length, Christ came, and according to ancient prophecies, *set up his kingdom* in the world.† He abolished the distinction, which had so long subsisted between the posterity of Abraham and other nations, and either in person, or by his Spirit, selected his followers from both Jews and Gentiles, thus making “in himself, *of twain, one new man.*”‡

On examining the scriptures, with regard to this new kingdom, the christian church, we learn, from the formation of particular churches, and the instructions addressed to the members, as well as from addresses made to both Jews and Gentiles, who were without, that it is a society, composed of *select individuals*, professing faith in Christ. Credible evidence of piety is the requisite to admission. Whether natural descent, or any religious rite, is sufficient to introduce the subject into this church, we are not informed. We have, therefore, no evidence, that, in that respect, which concerns the question before us, the two churches are alike.

It has, however, been supposed, that the church membership of infants is supported in the following passage: “Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; *for of such is the kingdom of heaven.*”§

In the gospels of Mark and Luke, it follows, “Who-soever shall not receive the kingdom of God, as a little child, he shall not enter therein.”|| We cannot suppose, that our Lord used words, in such different senses, in the same speech, as would unavoidably mislead his hearers. In the latter passage, the kingdom of God denotes heaven, and to receive the kingdom, as a little child, is to receive it, with the humility and docile disposition, which characterize children. This passage explains the former. Of such, says Christ, is the king-

* Exod. xii. 44—49.

† Dan. ii. 44.

‡ Eph. ii. 15.

§ Matt. xix. 14.

|| Mark x. 15, & Luke xviii. 17.

dom of heaven. Does he mean, of such in age and size, of such in the moral temper of heart, or of such in humility and docility of disposition? His subsequent remark determines in favour of the latter meaning. Nor is this a singular application of the phrase. On another occasion, he says, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."* He certainly does not mean, Except ye become as little children, in age and size, but in humility; for he immediately adds, "Whosoever, therefore, shall *humble himself, as this little child*," &c.†

The following passage also has been supposed to favour the church membership of infants: "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; *else were your children unclean; but now are they holy*."‡

The holiness ascribed to the children, cannot be moral holiness, for it is ascribed to the unbelieving parent also. Nor can it be ceremonial or federal holiness, securing a title to church membership, or any church privilege; for though it is ascribed to the unbelieving parent, he is not considered a member of the church, or entitled to any church privilege. Nor is this interpretation consistent with the apostle's reasoning. It appears, that the Corinthians had inquired of the apostle whether it was lawful for believers, who were married to unbelievers, to continue the marriage connexion. The apostle determines, that it is lawful; for, says he, the unbeliever is sanctified by the believer, that is, as

* Matt. xviii. 3.

† Matt. *Suffer little children*. Mark. *Suffer the little children*. Luke. *Suffer little children*. It should, however, be observed, that, in the original, the expression is the same in each gospel. The article is uniformly inserted; though, by our translators, it is omitted, in the gospels of Matthew and Luke. Without the article, the words of Christ seem to form a *general* direction, concerning little children; but with the article, they evidently form a *particular* direction, concerning *those children*, whose approach the disciples were preventing.

‡ 1 Cor. vii. 14.

“every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is *sanctified* by the word of God and prayer.”* In this sense, the unbeliever is sanctified, so that it is lawful for the parties to dwell together. Now if it was not lawful to dwell together, your children would, of consequence, be unclean. But they are not unclean. Therefore, you may be satisfied, that your cohabitation is lawful marriage. But to urge the church membership of children, or their title to any church privilege, as proof, that the unbeliever is sanctified to the believer, so that it is lawful for them to dwell together, is quite irrelevant.”†

The question returns, Is there any evidence, that the Jewish church and the christian church are the same? or that the children of believers are members of the christian church, as the children of Jews were members of the Jewish church? We cannot believe without evidence. And clear evidence is requisite to support a sentiment, which counteracts the first impressions we receive from the word of God; still clearer, to support a sentiment, fraught with consequences embarrassing and dangerous.

Are we ready to acknowledge the children of believers, as members of the church, in the same sense, as the children of Jews were members of the Jewish church? Are we ready to acknowledge their right to the Lord's supper, as soon, at least, as they are capa-

* 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5.

† The interpretation here adopted, is strengthened by the use of the word *ἁγιασμος*, in 1 Thes. iv. 3, 4, 7, and approved by AMBROSE, who says, “The children are holy, because they are born of lawful marriage,” MUSCULUS and MELANTHON, in Mr. Tombes' *Exercitation*, p. 11, 12, 13; CAMERARIUS, VATABLUS and CAMERO, in loc. VELTHUYSIUS, *Opera*, Tom. i. p. 801; SUARES and VASQUES, apud Chamieri *Panstrat.* Tom. iv. L. v. C. x. § 50; DIETERICUS, apud Wolfii *Curæ*, in loc. See also Dr. MACKNIGHT, who says, “I, therefore, think with Elsner, that the words, in this verse, have neither a federal nor a moral meaning, but are used in the idiom of the Hebrews,” &c. *Translation of the Apost. Epist.* Note on 1 Cor. vii. 14.

ble of discerning the Lord's body? and the consequent obligation of the church, to require their attendance, and to discipline them, if they neglect to attend? To consider and treat them, as members of the church, until formally excluded; and to consider and treat them, as not members, until formally admitted, are very different things. The latter is the uniform practice of protestant dissenters; the former only is consistent with the principle, that the children of believers are church members. But it most evidently tends to confound the church with the world, and, it is to be feared, is the most pernicious practice that ever infested and laid waste the vineyard of the Lord.

An attempt has been sometimes made, to support the practice of infant baptism, on the ground of the Jewish proselyte baptism. The argument is this—The Jews were in the habit of receiving proselytes, both adults and infants, by baptism, as well as by circumcision. Christ and his apostles being acquainted with this practice, when he commanded them, *in general terms*, to teach all nations, baptizing them, he must have intended, and they must have understood him to intend, that baptism to which they had been accustomed, the baptism of infants as well as adults.

This argument would have some force, were there any sufficient evidence, that the Jews, in the time of Christ, or in any preceding age, admitted proselytes by baptism. But of this, no evidence has been produced. There is no intimation of proselyte baptism, in the Old Testament, or in the apochryphal books, or in the New Testament, or in any writings soon after the time of Christ (as the works of Philo, the Jew, and of Josephus, who both wrote concerning the laws and customs of the Jews,) or in the Chaldec Paraphrases, or in the works of the christian fathers, for the first three or four centuries. The first mention of proselyte baptism is in the Jewish Talmuds, which were composed between the second and fifth centuries; and the manner, in which

it is mentioned in the Talmuds, shows, that it was then a novel and questionable practice.

Dr. JENNINGS. "But after all, it remains to be proved, not only that christian baptism was instituted in the room of proselyte baptism; but that the Jews had any such baptism, in our Saviour's time. The earliest accounts we have of it, are in the Mishna and Gemara; the former compiled, as the Jews assert, by Rabbi Juda, in the second century; though learned men, in general, bring it several centuries lower; the latter, not till the seventh century. There is not a word of it in Philo, nor yet in Josephus, though he gives an account of the proselyting of the Idumeans, by Hyrcanus."*

Dr. OWEN. "The institution of the rite of baptism is no where mentioned, in the Old Testament. There is no example of it, in those ancient records; nor was it ever used, in the admission of proselytes, while the Jewish church continued. No mention of it occurs, in Philo, in Josephus, in Jesus, the son of Sirach, nor in the Evangelical History. This Rabbinical opinion, therefore, owes its rise to the Tannæ, or Ante-Mishnical doctors, after the destruction of their city.—The opinion of some learned men, therefore, about the transferring of a Jewish baptismal rite (which, in reality, did not then exist,) by the Lord Jesus, for the use of his disciples, *is destitute of all probability.*"†

Dr. LARDNER. "As for the baptism of Jewish proselytes, I take it to be *a mere fiction of the Rabbins*, by whom we have suffered ourselves to be imposed upon."‡

On the supposition, that the command of Christ to teach, did not limit his subsequent command, to such as were taught, it is, doubtless, fair reasoning, that, when Christ, in general terms, commanded his apostles to baptize, he must have intended, and they must have under-

* *Jewish Antiq.* Vol. 1. p. 136.

† *Theologoumena*, L. v. Digress. iv.

‡ *Letters to and from Dr. Doddridge*, Let. lxxxix. p. 275. But for a full examination of the subject, see Dr. GILL's *Dissertation concerning the Baptism of Jewish Proselytes*.

stood him to intend, that kind of baptism to which they had been accustomed. So far the argument is good. But there is no evidence, that the baptism, to which they had been accustomed, was proselyte baptism of adults and infants. To what kind of baptism, then, had they been accustomed? We know of none, but the baptism of John. But John did not baptize infants. His baptism was a baptism of repentance, and acknowledgment of Him that was to come, and, therefore, a baptism of adults only. This was the baptism, which the disciples of Jesus administered, in the beginning of his ministry, as it is written, "that Jesus *made and baptized more disciples* than John; though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples."* The baptism of adults was that, to which alone they had been accustomed; and therefore, if Christ, in general terms, commanded his apostles to baptize, he must have intended, and they must have understood him to intend, the baptism of adults only.

The following quotations present to our view the last ground to which Pædobaptists resort.

BOSSUET, *Bishop of Meaux*. "Experience has shown that all the attempts of the Reformed to confound the Anabaptists, by the scripture, have been weak; and, therefore, *they are, at last, obliged to allege to them the practice of the church.*"†

MR. CHAMBERS. "As none, but adults, are capable of believing, they" (the German Baptists) "argued, that no others are capable of baptism; especially, as there is no passage, in all the New Testament, where the baptism of infants is clearly enjoined. Calvin, and other writers against them, are pretty much embarrassed, to answer this argument; and *are obliged to have recourse to tradition, and the practice of the primitive church.*"‡

Also, the *Oxford Divines*, in a convocation, held one thousand, six hundred and forty seven, acknowledged, "that, without the consentaneous judgment of the uni-

* John iv. 1, 2. † In Stennett's *Answer to Russen*, p. 184.

‡ *Cyclopedia*, Art. *Anabaptists*.

versal church, they should be at a loss, when they are called upon for proof, in the point of infant baptism.”*

What, then, is the evidence from antiquity, in favour of infant baptism?

It has been already stated, that the writers of the New Testament are silent on this subject, whether recording the formation of the primitive churches, or addressing epistles to those churches. They frequently mention the baptism of believers; but preserve a profound silence on the baptism of infants.

The christian writers of the first century; who immediately succeeded the apostles, Barnabas, Hermas, Clemens Romanus, Ignatius and Polycarp, usually called, by way of distinction, *apostolical fathers*, frequently mention the baptism of believers; but, like the inspired penmen, are entirely silent on the subject of infant baptism.

The christian writers of the second century, Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Theophilus of Antioch, Tatian, Irenæus and Clemens Alexandrinus, frequently mention the baptism of believers; but, like the inspired penmen, and the apostolical fathers, never mention infant baptism.

There is, indeed, in the writings of Irenæus, one passage, which has been adduced in proof of this practice: “Christ passed through all the ages of man, that he might save all by himself, that is, all who, by him, are regenerated to God, infants, and little ones, and children, and youths, and persons advanced in age.”†

As the word translated *regenerated*, sometimes, in the writings of the christian fathers, denotes *baptism*, some have supposed, that, in this passage, it may be properly translated *baptized*. The passage would then stand, Christ came to save all by himself, that is, *all who, by him, are baptized to God, &c.*

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* In Lawson's *Baptismalogia*, p. 116.

† *Contra Hæres.* L. ii. C. xxii.

There are two considerations, which forbid this translation. First: It makes the passage unintelligible. It is intelligible, that all, who are saved, are *regenerated* by Christ; but what possible meaning can be attached to the assertion, that all, who are saved, *are baptized by Christ to God?* On what principle of interpretation is it justifiable, to reject the natural, common meaning of a word, when, at the same time, it perfectly accords with the scope of the passage, and to adopt a figurative meaning, which renders the passage unintelligible?

Secondly: This interpretation will not accord with the strain of the writer's discourse; or, in the words of Le Clerc, "we see nothing here concerning baptism; nor is there any thing relating to it, in the immediately preceding or following words."*

Now this testimony, uncertain as it must be considered, at the best, and given at the close of the second century, is the first testimony that is insisted on by learned Pædobaptists. Dr. Wall admits, "This is the first express mention we have met with of infants baptized."† But though Dr. Wall calls it *express mention*, it is generally given up, as very uncertain.‡

MONTHLY REVIEW. "The authorities produced, are Justin Martyr and Irenæus, in the second century.—With respect to the testimony of Justin, it requires very considerable ingenuity, to make it, in any view, an argument in favour of infant baptism. There is a passage in Irenæus more to the purpose; *but the passage is equivocal.*"§

The first christian writer, in the beginning of the third century, Tertullian of Carthage, opposed the baptism of infants, which, in the words of Professor Vennema, "he certainly would not have done, if it had been a tradition, and a public custom of the church, seeing he was very tenacious of traditions; nor had it been a

* *Hist. Eccles. Secul. ii. Ann. 180. § 33. p. 778.*

† *Hist. of Inf. Bap. Part. i. C. iii. p. 16.*

‡ See particularly, VENEMÆ *Hist. Eccles. Tom. iii. Secul. ii. § 109.*

§ For May, 1784. p. 394.

tradition, would he have failed to mention it.”* His treatment of this subject leads us to conclude, that infant baptism was then a novel practice, just beginning, and approved by very few. His words, as translated by that learned Pædobaptist, Du Pin, are as follows:—

“Jesus Christ says indeed, ‘Hinder not little children from coming to me;’ but that they should come to him, as soon as they are advanced in years, as soon as they have learnt their religion, when they may be taught whither they are going, when they are become christians, when they begin to be able to know Jesus Christ. What is there, that should compel this innocent age to receive baptism? And since they are not yet allowed the disposal of temporal goods, is it reasonable, that they should be intrusted with the concerns of heaven?”†

Several quotations concerning infant baptism have been made from the writings of Origen, who flourished, in the former part of this century. But his original works are not now extant. These quotations are taken from a very corrupt Latin version, made by Ruffinus; who, as Quenstedius observes, “has used so great a liberty (as he himself acknowledges in his prefaces, and for which Jerome reproves him,) that he retrenched, added, and altered, whatever he considered as deserving to be cashiered, added or changed; so that the reader is frequently uncertain, whether he read Origen or Ruffinus.”‡ And Grotius also, concerning the sentiments of Origen, says, “Some things ascribed to him, were penned by an uncertain author, and some things are interpolated.—What Origen thought about the final punishment of the wicked, is difficult from his writings to be asserted, all things are so interpolated by Ruffinus.”||

The only passage from the Greek of Origen, which is produced in proof of this practice, contains a clause,

* *Hist. Eccles.* Secul. ii. § 108.

† *Lib. de Baptismo*, C. xviii; in Du Pin’s *Hist. Eccles. Writers*, Cent. iii. p. 80.

‡ *Dialog. de Patriis Illust. Doct. Script. Virorum*, p. 632.

|| *Apud Poli Synops.* ad Matt. xix. 14 and xxv. 46.

which represents the infants, as *desiring the sincere milk of the word*. Therefore, Dr. Wall acknowledges, that this does “very much puzzle the cause, and make it doubtful, whether Origen be to be there understood, of infants in age, or of such christian men, as are endued with the innocence and simplicity of infants.”*

This practice, however, no doubt, commenced in the latter part of the second century, and gradually gained ground in the third. As the sentiment prevailed, that baptism was necessary to salvation, parents became more anxious to have their children baptized, especially when sick and in danger of death.

VITRINGA. “The ancient christian church, from the highest antiquity, after the apostolic times, appears generally to have thought, that baptism is absolutely necessary for all that would be saved by the grace of Jesus Christ. It was, therefore, customary in the ancient church, if infants were greatly afflicted, and in danger of death; or if parents were affected with a singular concern about the salvation of their children, to present their infants, or children, in their minority, to the bishop, to be baptized. But if these reasons did not urge them, they thought it better, and more for the interest of minors, that their baptism should be deferred, till they arrived at a more advanced age; which custom was not yet abolished, in the time of Austin, though he vehemently urged the necessity of baptism, while, with all his might, he defended the doctrines of grace against Pelagius.”†

SALMASIUS. “An opinion prevailed, that no one could be saved, without being baptized; and *for that reason, the custom arose of baptizing infants.*”‡

So unsettled, however, was the practice in Africa, in the middle of the third century, that Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, was unable to determine the question,

* *Hist. of Inf. Bap.* Part 1. p. 32.

† *Observat. Sac.* Tom. i. L. ii. C. vi. § 9.

‡ *Epist. ad Justum Pacium.*

whether infants might be baptized before the eighth day, without convening a council of African bishops. In this council, it was determined, that baptism need not be deferred. And finally, in the year four hundred and eighteen, the Milevitan council, at the instigation of Austin, decreed the necessity of infant baptism, in these terms: "It is our pleasure, that whoever denies, that new born infants are to be baptized,—let him be anathema."*

The correctness of these statements, concerning the practice of the primitive church, is confirmed by the following testimonies; the first, furnished by an apostle, and the rest, as usual, by Pædobaptist authors.

St. PAUL. "As many of you, as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ."†

* From this period, every century has presented a succession of witnesses to the truth of the Baptist sentiments, as well as numberless decrees of popes, and kings, and councils, denouncing the severest penalties on this "pernicious sect."

Cardinal HOSIUS, *President of the Council of Trent*. "If the truth of religion were to be judged of, by the readiness and cheerfulness, which a man of any sect shows in suffering, then the opinion and persuasion of no sect can be truer or surer, than that of the Anabaptists; since there have been none, for these twelve hundred years past, that have been more grievously punished, or that have more cheerfully and steadfastly undergone, and even offered themselves to, the most cruel sorts of punishment, than these people."—"The Anabaptists are a pernicious sect, of which kind the Waldensian brethren seem also to have been.—Nor is this heresy a modern thing; for it existed in the time of Austin." In *Rees' Reply to Walker*, p. 220; and apud Schyn *Hist. Mennonit.* p. 135.

Dr. MOSHEIM. "The true origin of that sect, which acquired the denomination of Anabaptists, by their administering anew the rite of baptism, to those who came over to their communion, and derived that of Mennonites, from the famous man, to whom they owe the greatest part of their present felicity, is hid in the remotest depths of antiquity, and is, of consequence, extremely difficult to be ascertained." *Eccles. Hist.* Vol. iv. p. 439.

See also DANVERS on *Baptism*, REES' *Reply to Walker*, and ROBINSON'S *History and Researches*.

Concerning Dr. Gill's supposed concession, that he was not able to find any instance of an opposer of infant baptism, from the fourth to the eleventh century, See Dr. BALDWIN'S *Series of Letters to Dr. Worcester*, Let. xxiv. p. 232.

† *Epistle to the churches of Galatia*, Chap. iii. ver. 27.

ERASMUS. "Paul does not seem" (in Rom. v. 14.) "to treat about infants.—*It was not yet the custom for infants to be baptized.*"*

LUTHER. "It cannot be proved by the sacred scripture, that infant baptism was instituted by Christ, or begun by the first christians after the apostles."†

M. De La RoQUE. "The primitive church did not baptize infants; and the learned Grotius proves it, in his annotations on the gospel."‡

LUDOVICUS VIVES. "No one, in former times, was admitted to the sacred baptistery, except he was of age, understood what the mystic water meant, desired to be washed in it, and expressed that desire more than once."||

Mr. CHAMBERS. "It appears that in the primitive times, none were baptized but adults."§

Bp. BARLOW. "I do believe and know, that there is neither precept nor example in scripture, for Pædo-baptism, nor any just evidence for it, for about two hundred years after Christ."¶

SALMASIUS and SUICERUS. "In the two first centuries, no one was baptized, except, being instructed in the faith, and acquainted with the doctrine of Christ, he was able to profess himself a believer; because of those words, *He that believeth, and is baptized.*"**

M. FORMEY. "They baptized, from this time" (the latter end of the second century,) "infants, as well as adults."††

CURCELLÆUS. "*The baptism of infants, in the two first centuries after Christ, was altogether unknown; but in the third and fourth, was allowed by some few.* In the

* *Annotat. ad Rom. v. 14.*

† In A. R's. *Vanity of Infant Baptism*, Part. ii. p. 8.

‡ In Stennett's *Answer to Russen*, p. 188.

|| *Annotat. in Aug. de Civ. Dei*, L. i. C. xxxvii.

§ *Cyclopædia*, Art. *Baptism*. ¶ *Letter to Mr. J. Tombs.*

** *Epist. ad Justum Pacium. Thesaur. Eccles.* sub. voce *Συραζεις*, Tom. ii. p. 1136.

†† *Abridg. Eccles. Hist.* Vol. i. p. 33.

fifth and following ages, it was generally received.—The custom of baptizing infants did not begin before the third age after Christ was born. *In the former ages, no trace of it appears*,—and it was introduced without the command of Christ.”*

RIGALTIIUS. “In the Acts of the Apostles, we read, that both men and women were baptized, when they believed the gospel preached by Philip; without any mention being made of infants. *From the apostolic age, therefore, to the time of Tertullian, the matter is doubtful.*”†

VENEMA. “Tertullian has no where mentioned Pædobaptism among the traditions of the church, nor even among the customs of the church, that were publicly received, and usually observed; nay, he plainly intimates that, in his time, it was yet a doubtful affair.—Nothing can be affirmed with certainty, concerning the custom of the church before Tertullian; seeing there is not any where, in more ancient writers, that I know of, undoubted mention of infant baptism. Justin Martyr, in his second apology, when describing baptism, mentions only that of adults.—I conclude, therefore, that Pædobaptism, cannot be certainly proved to have been practised before the times of Tertullian; and that there were persons in his age, who desired their infants might be baptized, especially, when they were afraid of their dying without baptism; which opinion Tertullian opposed, and by so doing, he intimates, that Pædobaptism began to prevail. These are the things that may be affirmed, with apparent certainty, concerning the antiquity of infant baptism, after the times of the apostles; *for more are maintained without solid foundation.*”‡

GROTIUS. “It seems to me that the baptism of infants was, of old, much more frequently practised in Africa, than in Asia, or other parts of the world; and

* *Institut. Relig. Christ.* L. i. C. xii. *Dissert. Secund. de Pecc. Orig.* § 56.

† In Stenner’s *Answer to Russen*, p. 74.

‡ *Hist. Eccles.* Tom. iii. *Secul.* ii. § 108, 109.

with a certain opinion of the greater necessity of it. For you will not find, in any of the councils, a more ancient mention of this custom, than in the council of Carthage.”*

EPISCOPIUS. “Pædobaptism was not accounted a necessary rite, till it was determined so to be, in the Milevitan council, held in the year four hundred and eighteen.”†

Dr. DODDRIDGE. “It is indeed surprising, that nothing more express is to be met with in antiquity upon this subject.”‡

Several well authenticated instances of christians, eminent in the church, who, though born of christian parents, were not baptized, but on their own profession, prove, that, even in the third and fourth centuries, infant baptism was not the universal practice of the church.

Bp. TAYLOR. “There is no pretence of tradition, that the church, in all ages, did baptize all the infants of christian parents. It is more certain, that they did not do it always, than that they did it, in the first age. St. Ambrose, St. Hierom and St. Austin, were born of christian parents, and yet not baptized, until the full age of a man and more.”||

DAILLE. “In ancient times, they often deferred the baptizing both of infants and of other people, as appears by the history of the emperors, Constantine the Great, of Constantius, of Theodosius, of Valentinian, and of Gratian, in St. Ambrose; and also by the orations and homilies of Gregory Nazianzen, and of St. Basil, upon this subject.”§

Gregory Nazianzen was born of christian parents, in the year three hundred and eighteen, and was not baptized, till between twenty and thirty years of age.¶

* *Annotat. in Matt. xix. 14.* † *Institut. Theolog. L. iv. C. xiv.*

‡ *Lectures, p. 522.* || *Liberty of Prophecy, Sect. v. p. 84.*

§ *Right Use of the Fathers, B. ii. C. vi. p. 149.*

¶ See GROTH *Annotat. in Matt. xix. 14*; DU PIN's *Eccles. Hist. Cent. iv. p. 159*; *Gen. Biog. Dict. Art. Greg. Naz.*

Chrysostom was born of christian parents, in the year three hundred and fifty-four, and was not baptized, till about twenty-one years of age.*

Augustine, bishop of Hippo, commonly called Austin, was born the same year with Chrysostom. His mother Monica was a christian, at the time of his birth, and ordered those ceremonies, which it was then customary to perform on the children of christians.† At one time, in youth, he was seized with a dangerous illness, and earnestly desired to be baptized. His mother was hastering to comply, when he recovered, and his baptism was deferred. Nor, according to his own account, did he receive baptism, until he professed the christian religion, at the age of thirty years.‡ Believing that he had suffered from this delay, he became “afterwards a strenuous assertor of the expediency of more early baptism.”§

It has been strongly urged, in support of the antiquity of infant baptism, that, in the Pelagian controversy, Austin adduces this practice, in proof of the doctrine of original sin: “Infant baptism the whole church practises; it was not instituted by councils, but was ever in use.”||

Did Austin mean, that infant baptism was *the universal practice* of the church? The indisputable facts, that he himself, though born of a christian parent, was not baptized in infancy, and that he found it necessary, through the whole of his life, strongly to oppose the prevailing, and, as he deemed it, criminal delay of this ordinance, render this interpretation entirely inadmissible.

* See GROTIJ *Annotat.* in Matt. xix. 14; DU PIN’s *Eccles. Hist.* Cent. 5. p. 6, 7.

† “I was then signed with the sign of his” (Christ’s) “cross, and was seasoned with his salt, so soon as I came out of my mother’s womb, who greatly trusted in thee.” *Confessions*, Book i. C. xi p. 17.

‡ See “*Augustine’s Confessions Abridged*,” in Milner’s *Hist. of the Church*, Vol. ii. Cent. v. C. ii.

§ MILNER’s *Hist. of the Church*, Vol. ii. p. 302. Note.

|| In DR. WORCESTER’s *Letters*, Let. xxi.

We must conclude, that infant baptism, though not yet considered a necessary duty, was, in the time of Austin, generally tolerated, nor ever refused to those parents, who desired it for their children. Further than this, it is not possible to stretch the meaning of Austin, without making him contradict his own confessions and his own conduct.

That Austin should suppose this practice to have been "ever in use," is not strange, when we consider, that, in the words of Hospinianus, "in the time of Austin, it was commonly believed, that whatever was received by the church, as a devotional custom, proceeded from apostolical tradition, and the doctrine of the Holy Spirit."*

It may still be urged, that, though there be no evidence of infant baptism, in the two first centuries, yet the prevalence of this practice in Africa, during the third century, as appears from the proceedings of the council of Carthage, in the year two hundred and fifty-six, and its general prevalence through the whole of the christian world, during the fourth and fifth centuries, as appears from the testimonies, furnished by the Pelagian controversy, afford sufficient proof, that it must have been of apostolic origin; and that this proof is greatly strengthened, by the consideration, that, if not apostolic, it could not have been introduced, without violent opposition.

To this, the case of *infant communion* furnishes a full reply. The same evidence can be adduced, in favour of the antiquity of infant communion, as of infant baptism. And in the article of opposition, infant communion has the advantage of its sister practice. For while there appears to have been some opposition to the introduction of infant baptism, by Tertullian, Gregory Nazianzen and others, nothing of the kind appears, in the case of infant communion.

As these points, if established, must, in the minds of those who reject infant communion, completely invali-

* *Hist. Sacram.* L. ii. p. 41.

date the argument from antiquity, in favour of infant baptism, and as these points must be established by testimony, independently of argumentation, permit me to introduce the following quotations.

SALMASIUS and SUICERUS. "Because the eucharist was given to adult catechumens, when they were washed with holy baptism, without any space of time intervening, this also was done to infants, *after Pædobaptism was introduced.*"*

BÜDDÆUS. "It is manifest, that, in the ancient church, it was usual to give the eucharist to infants, which custom arose about the third century, and continued in the western church, to the beginning of the twelfth century, as Quenstedius shows. This custom seems to have prevailed, first in the African church, and to have been propagated thence to other churches of the west. Certainly, we no where find it more frequently mentioned, than in the writings of Cyprian, of Austin, and of Paulinus. The error seems to have arisen, from a false opinion concerning the absolute necessity of the eucharist; and it has been observed by learned men, that this arose from the words of Christ, John vi. 53, not well understood."†

HOSPINIANUS. "The Lord's supper was given to the infants of believers, in the time of Pope Innocent the First, of Cyprian, and of Austin; as well in Europe, as in Asia and Africa, and that as necessary to salvation.—Jerom, Austin and other fathers testify, that they who were baptized, not only adults, but also infants, without any delay, received the Lord's supper in both kinds."‡

CHILLINGWORTH. "St. Augustine, I am sure, held the communicating of infants, as much apostolic tradition, as the baptizing of them.—The eucharist's necessity for infants—was taught by the consent of the em-

* *Thesaur. Eccles.* sub voce *Συναξίς*.

† *Theolog. Dogmat.* L. v. C. i. § 19.

‡ *Hist. Sacram.* L. ii. C. ii. p. 51.

inent fathers of some ages, without any opposition, from any of their contemporaries ; and was delivered by them, not as doctors, but as witnesses ; not as their opinion, but as apostolic tradition.”*

Dr. PRIESTLEY. “It is remarkable, that, in all christian antiquity, we always find, that communion in the Lord’s supper immediately followed baptism. And no such thing occurs, as that of any person having a right to one of these ordinances, and not to the other.”†

VENEMA. “In the ancient church, those two sacraments” (baptism and the Lord’s supper) “in respect of the subjects, were never separated, the one from the other.—In the thirteenth century, baptized infants ceased to be admitted to the eucharist, because it began to be administered under one kind.”‡

Dr. WALL. “—That the Roman church, about the year one thousand, *entertaining the doctrine of transubstantiation*, let fall the custom of giving the holy elements to infants ; and the other western churches, mostly following their example, did the like, upon the same account ; but that the Greeks, not having the same doctrine, continued, and do still continue, the custom of communicating infants.”||

Let me conclude this part of the discourse, by inquiring, Why do not the advocates of infant baptism, become advocates of infant communion ?

Is the scripture silent concerning the latter ordinance ? It is equally silent concerning the former. Are infants incapable of remembering Christ, of examining themselves, and of discerning the Lord’s body, which are required of those who receive the supper ? They are equally incapable of repenting and believing, which are required of those who receive baptism. Every argument

* *Relig. of Protest.* Answer to Pref. § 10, and Chap. iii. § 44.

† *Address on giving the Lord’s supper to Children*, p. 10.

‡ *Hist. Eccles. Secul. ii. § 100 ; Secul. xiii. § 164.*

|| *Hist. of Inf. Bap.* p. 517.

which is brought to prove, that the requirement to repent and believe does not exclude infants from the one ordinance, will equally prove, that the requirement to examine one's self and discern the Lord's body does not exclude them from the other ordinance.

Every argument also, which is urged in support of the one ordinance, may be urged, with equal plausibility, in support of the other.

Ought infants to be baptized, because, under a former dispensation, they were circumcised? So also, because, under a former dispensation, they partook of the passover, they ought now to be admitted to communion. Ought they to be baptized, because they are connected with their parents, in covenant with God? For the same reason, they ought, with their parents, to be admitted to communion. Ought they to be baptized, because they are members of the visible church? For the same reason, they ought to be admitted to communion. Ought they to be baptized, because Christ commanded little children to be brought to him, and declared, that of such is the kingdom of heaven? For the same reason, they ought to be admitted to communion. Ought they to be baptized, because they are not unclean, but holy? For the same reason, they ought to be admitted to communion. Does it lessen the privileges, which the church anciently enjoyed, to withhold baptism from infants? And does it not equally lessen those privileges, to debar infants from communion? Is it harsh and injurious to exclude infants from baptism? And is it not equally harsh and injurious to exclude them from communion?

Accordingly, Dr. Williams, the opponent of Mr. Booth, inquires, "Are not the same reasons, which are brought for infant baptism, in like manner, applicable to infant communion? And will not the objections against the latter, admit of the same answer, as those against the former?"*

**Notes on Mr. Morrice's Social Relig.* p. 78.

The reasons stated in both parts of this discourse, lead us to the conclusion, that *the immersion of a professing believer, into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is the only christian baptism.*

“He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.”* To believe in Christ is necessary to salvation; and to be baptized is the instituted method of professing our belief. It is, therefore, not only an infinitely important question to all men, whether they believe in Christ; but it is also a very important question to all christians, whether they have been baptized.

If you love Christ, you cannot consider this question unimportant. You will be desirous of discovering the will of him whom you love, and of testifying your love, be joyfully obeying. “*If ye love me,*” said Jesus, “*keep my commandments.*”† “*Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.*”‡

If, when your mind adverts to this question, you fear the consequences of an examination, and dread those sacrifices, which a discovery that you have been mistaken, may enforce on your conscience; or if you feel the influence of long established sentiments, or imagine, that the subject is too dark and intricate for your investigation; look to the Son of God, who hesitated not to make the greatest sacrifices, and to endure the most painful sufferings for you; and look up to the Father of lights, to send the Holy Spirit, according to the promise of his Son, to guide you into all the truth.

Especially, my brethren, diligently use the means of discovering the truth. Put yourselves in the way of evidence. Indulge free examination. Though the sun shines with perfect clearness, you will never see that light which others enjoy, if you confine yourselves in a cavern, which the beams of the sun cannot penetrate. Be assured, that there is sufficient evidence on this subject, if you

* Mark xvi. 16.

† John xiv. 15.

‡ John xv. 14.

seek to discover it. But if your love for truth is not sufficiently strong to make you willing to seek and strive for the discovery of evidence, God will probably leave you to be contented with error.

In order, therefore, to stimulate your minds to candid and energetic research, prize truth above all other things. Be impressed with the conviction, that nothing can compensate you, for the loss of truth. “She is more precious than rubies, and all the things thou canst desire, are not to be compared unto her.”* She will keep you in the right way, the way of duty, of usefulness, of happiness. She will lead you to heaven. Seek her, therefore, as silver, and search for her, as for hid treasures.

Finally, *If any man desire to do the will of God, “he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.”†*

* Prov. iii. 15.

† John vii. 17.

FINIS.

